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RESEARCH DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM  
THE BA'ATH PARTY IN SYRIA AND IRAQ,  
1964-1970

SUMMARY

*Ba'athist régimes*

A. Introduction. ~~The Ba'ath Party have~~ been in power in Syria since 1963 and in Iraq since July 1968. (Paragraph 1)

B. In February 1966 the moderate, or "orthodox", Ba'ath régime in Syria led by President Hafiz was ousted by a group of extremists, or "neo-Ba'athists". They nearly all belonged to the Alawite and Druze minority sects. At home, they favoured Left-wing policies; abroad, they favoured closer cooperation with Communist countries and isolation from the UAR. After a time a power struggle began within the leadership between General Jadid, the Assistant Secretary-General of the Syrian Ba'ath Party, and General Assad, the Minister of Defence. The former favoured "neo-Ba'athist" policies and the latter more specifically Arab policies. In November 1970 Assad seized power. The Government which he then formed was predominantly Ba'athist. In November 1970 it acceded to the tripartite

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declaration on federal unity made earlier by the UAR, Libya and the Sudan (and in April 1971 Syria, Libya and the UAR declared their intention to form a new federation of Arab republics). (Paragraphs 2-11)

C. In July 1968 a "Right-wing", or "orthodox", Ba'athist group led by some of those who had been in power in 1963 seized power in Iraq. There have since been tensions within the Iraqi régime, including rivalry between civilian and military figures, but by the end of 1970 the one military figure of doubtful allegiance had been dismissed and the party had consolidated its position to the extent that it felt able to relax its internal policies slightly. (Paragraphs 12-13)

D. A comparison of policies shows that the disagreements between the "neo-Ba'athist" and "orthodox" wings of the Ba'ath party between 1968 and 1970 were caused by national rivalry between Syria and Iraq much more than doctrinal differences. The neo-Ba'athists' initial extremism was moderated when they had been in power for a time. They expanded relations with Communist countries, but allowed the Syrian Communist Party little room for manoeuvre. Expediency led them to adopt a conciliatory attitude to the UAR. The ~~new~~ so-called "orthodox" régime in Iraq, on the other hand, pursued

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		<p>a policy of isolation from the UAR and other Arab States despite its theoretical commitment to Pan-Arabism. It too fostered close relations with the Soviet Union (Paragraphs 14-22)</p> <p>E. Relations between the Ba'athist régimes in Syria and Iraq have been poor and characterised by rivalry. The ousting of the "neo-Ba'athists" in Syria in November 1970 seemed to hold out the prospect of an improvement in relations between the two countries, but little immediate improvement took place. (Paragraphs 23-25)</p> <p>F. The International Command, in theory the highest authority of the Ba'ath Party, was estranged from the Syrian régime after the "neo-Ba'athist <u>coup</u> and transferred its headquarters to Baghdad when the Ba'ath came to power there in 1968. Its activities in Iraq have been largely window-dressing for the régime, which pays for them. Relations between it and the régime have not been entirely smooth. (Paragraphs 26-28)</p> <p>G. The Ba'ath Party has regional branches in most other Arab countries. Nowhere do they appear to present an immediate threat to the existing régime. The Iraqi Ba'ath has been more active than the Syrian in spreading its</p> <p style="text-align: right;">/influence</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>CONFIDENTIAL</u></p>



influence, particularly in the Persian Gulf. (Paragraph 29)

H. The Ba'ath's policies have generally been detrimental to Western interests in the Middle East, particularly where oil has been concerned. There are indications, however, that the new Syrian régime will prove more flexible than the neo-Ba'athists were. (Paragraphs 30-31)

I. The many divisions which have taken place within the Ba'ath Party have been due less to ideological disagreements than to personal, factional, sectarian and national rivalries. There has been a wide gap between the theory and practice of Ba'athism. The realities of Arab politics have meant that the Ba'athist régimes have not implemented the social-democratic part of the party's programme; instead they have ruled by dictatorial methods. Rivalry with Nasser was one obstacle to the implementation of Pan-Arab policies, and national rivalries remain now that he has gone. (Paragraphs 32-37)

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	<p><del>ruled by dictatorial methods. Rivalry with Nasser was an obstacle to the implementation of Pan-Arab policies, and national rivalries remain now that he has gone. (Paragraphs 32-37)</del></p> <p>J. The party has nevertheless made its mark on the Middle East, both in that it has placed régimes in power in Syria and Iraq and kept them there and in that the doctrinaire Ba'athist element in these régimes' make-up has imparted a greater rigidity to their attitudes than might otherwise have existed. (Since the demise of the neo-Ba'athists in November 1970, however, Syria has shown signs of adopting a more flexible attitude to her problems, and in 1970 the Iraqi régime displayed a greater measure of realism in internal policies than previously.) (Paragraphs 38-39)</p> <p>K. Soviet influence in Syria and Iraq has increased under Ba'athist rule, but the Ba'athist régimes can be expected to retain a degree of independence from Soviet policies and to keep a rein on local Communist activities. (Paragraph 40)</p>	/Introduction

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*[Handwritten initials]*

~~Research Department Memorandum~~  
~~The Ba'ath Party in Syria and Iraq, 1964-1970~~

Introduction

*[Handwritten: Deleted]* Research Department Memoranda IR 6/13 of 1961  
*[Handwritten: and IR 6/3 of 1964]* traced the development of the Arab Socialist Renaissance Party (the Ba'ath) from 1958 up to the end of 1963, the year in which the party gained power in Syria and Iraq but lost it again in the latter after only nine months' rule. The present paper examines the main features of the party's development since then. In particular, it analyses the differences between the "orthodox" wing of the party - represented by the Syrian régime of 1963-1966 and by the present Iraqi régime, which has been in power since July 1968 - and the "neo-Ba'athist" group which ruled Syria from February 1966 to November 1970.<sup>(1)</sup> The position of the new, predominantly Ba'athist, Government formed in Syria in November 1970 is also discussed.

The Ba'ath in Syria, 1964-1970

2. After the demise of the Ba'ath in Iraq in November 1963, Syria became the focus of Ba'athist power. During 1963 the Syrian Ba'ath Party had been divided on various issues; chief among these was the possibility

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of unity with the UAR, which, however, receded after an attempted Nasserist coup had been foiled in July. By the end of the year General Amin al Hafiz had emerged as the most powerful figure in the ruling group, thanks less to sponsorship within the party than to the support of the army, many officers of which were not party members. He showed himself gifted at conciliation and manipulation of the conflicting factions among the civilians and the military alike.

3. By 1965, however, a split had appeared within the party between the moderate, or "orthodox", Ba'athists and a group of extremists, or "neo-Ba'athists". The moderates were represented by Hafiz himself, Michel Aflaq and Salah al Din Bitar, the two founders of the party, and Dr. Munif al Razzaz, a Jordanian who succeeded Aflaq as Secretary-General of the International Ba'ath Party in 1965. The "neo-Ba'athists" were led by General Salah al Jadid, who as Chief of Staff had the support of the bulk of the army. In the autumn Hafiz, in an effort to establish the primacy of himself and the civilians over the armed forces, set up a five-man Presidential Council, of which he was both the President and the only military member. At

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(1) The terminology used to refer to Ba'athist groups -"Left-wing", "Right-wing", "neo-Ba'athist", "orthodox", etc. - is not entirely satisfactory and can be misleading. The terms "orthodox" and "neo-Ba'athist" have, however, been used in this memorandum because of their widespread use during the period 1966-1970 ~~under review~~ and because they are of value in identifying the theoretical relationships of the régimes in Iraq and Syria respectively to the party founders<sup>during that period</sup>. Since the differences between the régimes in Baghdad and Damascus are primarily nationalist, and since the "neo-Ba'ath" no longer rule in Syria, it should normally be sufficient in future to refer to the groups in power in the two countries as "the Iraqi Ba'ath" and "the Syrian Ba'ath".

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the same time he emasculated the National Council of the Revolutionary Command, which had previously been the supreme authority, by enlarging it from 24 to 95 members, the great majority of whom were civilians. (The theoretical justification for this was that its base was broadened by the inclusion of representatives of the peasants, the trade unions, the professional classes, etc.). There followed a struggle for power between the International Command of the Ba'ath Party, sympathetic to Hafiz, and the (Syrian) Regional Command, which was dominated by Jadid. This was decided temporarily in Hafiz's favour in December, when he dissolved the Regional Command and transferred its powers to the International Command. But in February 1966 Jadid's supporters launched a successful coup, as a result of which Aflaq, Bitar and Razzaz left the country and Hafiz was imprisoned. <sup>In</sup> (Since 1967 he <sup>escaped and since then he</sup> has been living in exile, mainly in Iraq.)

4. The February 1966 coup resulted in the replacement of one civilian-military Ba'athist team by another, but one in which the army <sup>more</sup> were <sup>move</sup> dominant than previously and one whose outlook was substantially different from that of its predecessor. The neo-Ba'athists were

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younger and more radical than Hafiz and his associates. Nearly all belonged to the Alawite and Druze heterodox Muslim sects, which constitute less than 15 per cent of the Syrian population but <sup>which</sup> for historical reasons, have a much higher representation in the armed forces. (u) Resenting the Sunni Muslims' monopoly of power, <sup>pu. st. al.</sup> they carried their sectarian outlook to one of the main political issues in Syria, the question of relations with the UAR. Fearing that closer ties between the two countries would result in increased Sunni domination, as had been the case during the union of 1958-1961, they regarded Hafiz's intermittent efforts at rapprochement with Nasser with the utmost suspicion, even though it does not seem to have been his intention to do more than establish a modus vivendi with him. This, <sup>perhaps</sup> as much as any other policy issue, <sup>seems to have</sup> provided the immediate motive for the coup.

5. Other differences of policy also existed between the two groups, notably concerning the linked questions of socialism and relations with the Communist world. Differences had long existed within the Ba'ath Party as to

(u) See Research Department Memorandum: The Political Activity of the Alawites and Druzes in Syria (LR 6/48 of 1966).



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the form that Arab socialism should take and the speed with which it should be implemented. The neo-Ba'athists, who were young, inexperienced politically, and, in the case of the Alawites at least, tended to regard the Sunnis as feudal oppressors, leaned heavily towards Marxism and favoured extreme Left-wing policies at home and further expansion of contacts with Communist countries abroad. Towards the end of Hafiz's period in office they criticised him for neglecting relations with Communist China in particular; but this seems to have been a tactical manoeuvre rather than a reflection of a real preference on their part for Chinese, as opposed to Soviet, methods.

6. After the coup several civilians were given prominent positions, including Dr. Nur al Din Atassi, who became Head of State; Dr. Yusuf Zu'ain, who became Prime Minister; and Dr. Ibrahim Makhus, who became Foreign Minister. The real power, however, lay more with the party than with the Cabinet, and more with the army and General Jadid than with the party.

7. Friction between Jadid and Major Selim Hatum, a Druze commando officer, led to the latter making an unsuccessful bid for power in September 1966. After this the dominance



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of the Alawites over the Druzes, which had already been apparent and was one of the causes of Hattum's discontent, became even more marked. The sectarian nature of the

leadership proved from then on to be one of

its strengths; <sup>one of the reasons why the</sup> since conflicts within it <sup>did</sup> were

<sup>for several years with the</sup> ~~contained~~ for fear of letting in outsiders.

8. During 1967 and 1968 various stresses and strains appeared within the leadership. Eventually a power struggle developed between General Jadid and General Hafiz al Assad, the Minister of Defence, who was, like Jadid, an Alawite. Jadid identified himself with the policies with which the neo-Ba'athists had come to power - radical socialism, inclining towards Marxism; close cooperation with Communist countries; isolation from the UAR. On the Palestine issue he favoured a war of words rather than action, taking the view that Syria was not strong enough to contemplate renewed hostilities with Israel. (He and his supporters were responsible for the decision to withdraw from the Golan Heights in 1967.) Assad, on the other hand, favoured more specifically Arab policies, including the fostering of closer relations with the UAR, which would enable a more united front to be presented against Israel. He wished to

not lead to a serious upheaval

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reduce Syrian dependence on the USSR and, at home, had a less doctrinaire approach than Jadid to social and economic affairs.

9. Assad, as Minister of Defence, had the support of the bulk of the military. Jadid, who was Assistant Secretary-General of the Regional Command, exerted his influence through the party apparatus and through civilians such as Zu'ain and Makhus. Through the party he also exercised control over the guerrilla organisation, al Sa'iqah, which became virtually his private army. In October 1968 Assad was able to assert himself over Jadid's faction to the extent that Zu'ain and Makhus were dropped from the Cabinet. Thenceforward he was the dominant figure in the Syrian leadership. But he did not eliminate Jadid at this time, and did not always find it possible to push through his own policies. This was due to some extent to Soviet support for Jadid.

10. With the increase in Assad's influence, the general trend within the Syrian régime in 1969 and 1970 was towards moderation of the attitudes with which the neo-Ba'athists had begun. The mellowing experience of office may have contributed to this process. Also, once the party had held power for a comparatively

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long time it attracted to it many who had little real affinity with it but considered that their interests lay in joining it. Their influence, such as it was, was towards moderation. One observer noted, too, that each year was bringing into the party more young Alawite members who, on reaching adult life, were less conscious than their elders of discrimination against their sect. The régime remained nevertheless one of the most extreme in the Middle East.

11. Whatever semblance of stability the régime enjoyed was destroyed as the result of increased strains within it at the time of the Jordan civil war and Nasser's death in September 1970. Syria's intervention in the war was carried out at the instigation of the civilian wing of the party and was opposed by Assad. The lack of success of the operation led to recriminations and, after a period of political in-fighting, Assad carried out a bloodless coup on 13 November. Jadid and Atassi and some other members of the civilian wing were removed, and a new Provisional Regional Command was set up. From the com-munique issued by this body on 16 November it was evident that the new régime attached over-riding importance to improving relations

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(In April 1971 Syria, Libya and the UAR declared their intention to form a new federation of Arab republics.)

seen to be widened,

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with other revolutionary Arab States, particularly the UAR. As an earnest of this, on 27 November Syria acceded to the tripartite declaration on federal unity made earlier in the month by the UAR, Libya and the Sudan.<sup>(1)</sup>

Having been somewhat out on a limb during her neo-Ba'athist<sup>"</sup> period, Syria was thus showing a desire to return to the mainstream of Arab politics. At home, the Government formed on 21 November, with Assad as both Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, contained a majority of Ba'athists but also several "Nasserists" and two Communists. The base of power was ~~thus~~ mostly for presentational purposes, ~~thus seen to be widened,~~ but the Ba'ath retained overall control.

#### The Ba'ath in Iraq, 1968-1970

12. During its nine months in power in Iraq in 1963 the Ba'ath enjoyed little genuine support and was far from united. In opposition it remained disunited. By 1967 it was possible to distinguish two principal groups within it: the "Right-wing" Ba'ath, composed mainly of those who had led the party in 1963 and still associated with the International Command led by Aflaq, and a Left-wing group aligned with the neo-Ba'athists<sup>"</sup> in Syria. (There was also a small extremist group led by Ali Saleh al

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(1) In April 1971 Syria, Libya and the UAR declared their intention to form a new federation of Arab republics.



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Saladi, whose methods when in command of the National Guard in 1963 had done much to discredit the party.) It was the first of these, the "Right-wing" or "orthodox" Ba'ath, that came to power in July 1968. Several of the most important posts in the new Government went to figures who had enjoyed prominence in 1963: General Ahmad Hassan al Bakr, who had been Prime Minister in 1963, became President; General Hardan Abdul Ghaffar al Tikriti, Commander of the Air Force in 1963, became Minister of Defence; and General Saleh Mahdi Ammash, Minister of Defence in 1963, became Minister of the Interior.

13. This régime, like the one in Syria, was ~~subject to internal tensions.~~ *subject to internal tensions.* ~~a divided one.~~

At first the main rivalry within it was between Ammash and Tikriti, but in April 1970 both of them were relieved of Ministerial office and appointed Vice-

Presidents of the Republic, a move which ~~reduced the influence of them and the military~~ *marked a diminution of their influence and*

~~marked a diminution of their influence and that of the military wing,~~ *regarded as* and was a tactical victory for Saddam Hussein al Tikriti, the Deputy

Secretary General of the Regional Command of the Ba'ath Party, ~~a doctrinaire young~~ *and the party's leading theorist,*

~~Ba'athist,~~ who had by then gathered much power into his hands through the party apparatus.

In the latter half of 1970 Ammash re-established

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*and Vice-Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council,*

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<div>party appeared to have</div>	<p>his authority to some extent, but Hardan Tikriti was dismissed from office in October. (He was exiled, and in 1971 <del>he</del> was assassinated in Kuwait.) His demise was precipitated by a crisis in the leadership over the question of whether Iraqi troops should intervene in the Jordan civil war, but was mainly the result of a long-standing grievance against him on the part of civilian Ba'athists for his part in easing the party out of power in 1963. By the end of 1970 the <del>party</del> <sup>regime</sup> had established itself firmly in power by rooting out potential foci of opposition and there was a trend towards relaxation in internal policies; as one prominent Iraqi official put it, the tug-of-war between the technicians and the realists on the one hand and the doctrinaire extremists on the other <sup>had</sup> begun to move in the right direction.</p> <p><u>Ba'athist Policies in Syria and Iraq</u></p> <p>14. Examination of the policies pursued by the Ba'athist régimes in Syria and Iraq indicates that the differences which had existed between the "orthodox" and "neo-Ba'athist" wings of the party in Syria in 1965 became less clear-cut during the time when the "neo-Ba'athists" were in power. It shows also that the disagreements between the two wings of the party in Baghdad and Damascus during the period July 1968 - November 1970 were caused by national rivalry much more than doctrinal differences.</p> <p>15. The "neo-Ba'athists" first actions when in power did indeed have an extremist air about them. The Syrian Cabinet formed in March 1966</p>	

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included two members who were known for their Communist sympathies as well as Zu'ain and Makhus, who at least had leanings towards Marxism. Khalid al Jundi, President of the Syrian Federation of Trade Unions, who was an avowed Marxist, was allowed to build up a workers' militia for purging State institutions on the lines of the Chinese Red Guard, and his cousin, Colonel Abdul Karim al Jundi, became associated with equally extreme measures as head of the security services. The Government rescinded a decree banning Communists from the civil service and re-instated a number of them. In April the veteran Syrian Communist, Khalid Bikdash, returned to Damascus after an almost continuous eight-year exile. Ties with Communist countries were strengthened: the Soviet Union announced its decision to finance the Euphrates Dam in April 1966, after Zu'ain had visited Moscow, and diplomatic relations with North Viet-Nam and North Korea were established in July. Relations with the West deteriorated and, as the result of a dispute between the Syrian Government and the Iraq Petroleum Company, the flow of oil from Iraq to the Mediterranean was interrupted from December 1966 to March 1967.

16. The coming to power of the neo-Ba'athists



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thus marked a swing to the Left in Syria. But whether it was a decisive swing is open to question. Hafiz's régime had already, in 1965, undertaken sweeping measures of nationalisation. These measures had marked a milestone on the path of Moscow's gradual acceptance of the Ba'ath as an ally in the Middle East and, whereas the advent of the "neo-Ba'ath" provided the impetus to reach another milestone - the Euphrates Dam agreement -, in a sense this only put the finishing touches to a process begun long before. (The plans for the dam were being studied in Moscow as early as 1963.) Within Syria, the Ba'ath began to have dealings with individual Communists, but not with the Communist Party as such. Bikdash's return proved an anti-climax and little was heard of him afterwards in Syria. Khalid al Jundi's militia was disbanded in August 1967 and his cousin, Abdul Karim, (apparently) committed suicide in March 1969. By this time the influence of the extremist elements in the régime had been diluted, Zu'ain and Makhus had been relieved of office, and Assad's star was in the ascendant. He was, as previously indicated, either unable or unwilling to eliminate Jadid's faction completely at that time, and it continued to have influence. But

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from 1969 onwards there was little to distinguish the régime's policies from those which might have been followed by its predecessor. By August 1970, indeed, the wheel had turned full enough circle for a Soviet newspaper to be complaining of the persecution of Communists in Syria. And as for Sino-Syrian relations, they did not wax appreciably despite the pro-Chinese posture previously adopted by the neo-Ba'athists.

17. The policies pursued by the "orthodox" Ba'ath in Iraq from July 1968 onwards differed in some ways from those pursued by the neo-Ba'athists in Syria, but the broad picture in one respect was much the same - that of a non-Communist Government uneasily increasing its dependence on the USSR for reasons of expediency. Communists were given less freedom in Iraq than in Syria. The idea of forming a National Front, though often canvassed, was never put into practice because in Iraq, as in Syria, the Ba'ath were determined to prevent other parties sharing significantly in their power. ~~(The inclusion of a few non-Ba'athist Kurdish Ministers in the Cabinet since 1970 has been for purely presentational reasons.)~~ Iraq, like Syria, became almost completely dependent on Communist countries for

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arms supplies and negotiated substantial aid agreements with them - including East Germany, to whom she granted diplomatic recognition in April 1969. Like Syria, too, she remained neutral in the Sino-Soviet dispute but gave lower priority to her relations with China than to those with the Soviet Union.

18. On another important policy issue - relations with the UAR - the positions adopted by the opposing factions within the party <sup>in Syria</sup> prior to 1966 were almost reversed when they were in power: the neo-Ba'athists, who had previously been opposed to close relations with the UAR régime, came to adopt a fairly conciliatory attitude towards it, while the Iraqi Ba'ath, which claimed to be the orthodox wing of the party, pursued a policy of isolation from the UAR and other Arab States despite the party's theoretical commitment to Pan-Arabism.

19. Before they came to power in Syria, the neo-Ba'athists, narrow in outlook and resenting Sunni domination, had been opposed to close ties with the UAR. While paying lip-service to the same Pan-Arab dogmas as the orthodox Ba'athists, they seemed bent on pursuing their vision of Ba'athism within Syria regardless of what was happening elsewhere in the Arab world. Once they had come to power, however, they too



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came to realise the importance of enjoying some support from Cairo and avoiding complete isolation. They therefore made advances to the UAR, with the result that a defence agreement between the two countries was signed in November 1966. This opened up the possibility of Nasser acting as a restraining influence on the Syrian military, ~~though it was not sufficient to~~ <sup>but did not in fact</sup> prevent them from harassing Israel with guerrilla raids and artillery bombardment and thereby contributing to the crisis which led to the six-day war in June 1967.

20. Despite the defence agreement, there was little real warmth in Syrian-UAR relations in 1966 and 1967. With the growth of Assad's influence, however, from 1968 onwards a more genuine desire on Syria's part to improve her relations with Nasser became apparent and some individuals with Nasserist sympathies were given positions of responsibility within Syria as a result. At the same time, Egyptian influence on Syria's foreign policies became more obvious. Pressure from Cairo was instrumental in bringing an end to the crisis in Syrian-Lebanese relations over the guerrilla question in 1969, and the restrained nature of Syria's opposition to the American peace

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initiative in 1970 was equally a by-product of her desire not to step too far out of line with the UAR. In summary, the 'neo-Ba'athist' Government, though more extreme in outlook than Nasser, tried not to stand too openly in opposition to him in Arab affairs.

21. For the 'orthodox' wing of the party - its founders and the Syrian leaders of 1963-1966 - the question of relations with the UAR had long been a vexing one. Although they saw no real possibility of coming to terms with Nasser after the failure of the Syrian-Egyptian union of 1958-1961 and the abortive attempt at unity between the Ba'athist régimes and the UAR in 1963, for them the Ba'athist revolution was meaningless if deprived of its international content. This was the attitude that distinguished the International Command from the Syrian Regional Command in 1965.

22. Any truly orthodox Ba'athist régime might therefore have been expected at least to keep its lines open with Nasser, as Hafiz had done. But the régime established in Iraq in July 1968 more or less turned its back on him instead: leaving to the International Command the exegesis of Pan-Arab ideology, it pursued a narrowly independent policy in Arab affairs and, to protect its internal position, took



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measures against Nasserists in Iraq. Relations between the two countries became severely strained in 1970 when, with Iraq's condemnation of Nasser's acceptance of the American peace initiative, a bitter propaganda war broke out between them. After Nasser's death Iraq-UAR relations remained clouded and the Iraqi Ba'ath continued in isolation, having allowed other interests to come before those of Pan-Arab solidarity.

*Syrian and Iraqi Ba'ath*  
Relations between the Ba'ath in Syria and  
~~Iraq~~

23. Relations between the Ba'ath<sup>régimes</sup> in Syria and Iraq have been strained, <sup>partly</sup> ~~both~~ because they have represented different tendencies within the party ~~and because of national rivalry.~~ <sup>but much more because of national rivalry. As a cover for this national rivalry,</sup> ~~the~~ "neo-Ba'athists" used to refer to the Iraqis as a "Rightist clique" and to accuse them of collusion with the forces of imperialism and Zionism. <sup>in turn,</sup> The Iraqis dismissed the "neo-Ba'athists" as "militarists". The presence of the deposed Syrian President, Hafiz, in Iraq (from 1967 onwards) <sup>was a particular cause of</sup> ~~added to~~ <sup>régimes.</sup> ~~the~~ friction between the two ~~groups~~. Since July 1968 a prominent feature of the foreign policies of Syria and Iraq has ~~been~~ <sup>been</sup> the desire of each to isolate the other; a striking example of this was afforded by Iraq's attitude towards the Egyptian peace initiative

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in the Lebanese crisis in 1969: though basically unsympathetic to the Lebanese Government, Iraq took this as an opportunity to isolate Syria and backed the initiative, which effectively closed the door on Syrian intervention in the Lebanon.

24. The furthest the two countries have gone towards cooperation was an agreement on the stationing of Iraqi troops in Syria as part of the Eastern Command in 1969. But their presence caused misgivings among some Syrians and gave rise to a dispute as to who should command them.

25. The ousting of the 'neo-Ba'athists' from the Syrian Government in November 1970 <sup>seemed to</sup> held out the prospect of some improvement of relations between the two countries. ~~But~~ Iraq's

immediate reaction was non-committal and Syria has shown herself more interested in cementing her relations with the UAR than in putting relations with her sister Ba'ath régime on a more friendly footing.

#### The International Command

26. The International Command of the Ba'ath Party, in theory the highest authority in the party's hierarchy, has seen various changes of location and composition during the period under review. After the 'neo-Ba'athist' coup

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But, again because of national rivalry between Damascus and Baghdad,



in 1966, which involved the expulsion of Aflaq and other members of the old guard, the existing International Command was naturally estranged from the Syrian régime. ~~and~~ In August 1968, after the Ba'ath had returned to power in Iraq, it transferred its headquarters from Beirut to Baghdad. (The Syrian régime had meanwhile set up its own, rival, "International Command".)

27. In Iraq the International Command has been active in various ways, including training party cadres from other Arab States. It is largely a puppet of the Iraqi régime, which finances it ~~itself~~ and uses it as a means of conferring on itself a status of legitimacy. There is inevitably some friction between the Iraqis and this body composed ~~mainly~~ of ~~foreigners~~ Syrians, Lebanese and other nationalities as well as Iraqis. Aflaq himself, who was re-elected Secretary-General of the International Command in 1968, and again in 1970, deplores the arbitrary nature of the régimes in Iraq and Syria alike and has been openly critical of their policies.

Now is the International Command's approval of the Iraqi Ba'ath by any means complete.

28. The corruption of Ba'athism in the rough and tumble of its association with Syrian and Iraqi soldier politicians, which has transformed a Pan-Arab movement pledged to building a socialist revolution on a popular basis into two national dictatorships - a crime

/similar

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similar to that of which the Ba'ath used to accuse Nasser - has indeed confronted the party theorists with intractable problems. The Tenth Congress of the International Command, held early in 1970, acknowledged the difficulty by declaring that political realities necessitated that party ideology be implemented in stages. But it gave no clear directive as to what it considered these stages should be. The Iraqi régime, like the Syrian, has dealt with the problem by ad hoc implementation of party doctrine as and when feasible; whereas the International Command is concerned with enhancing the prestige of the 'orthodox' Ba'ath movement by the implementation of Ba'athist theory, the Ba'athist régimes are concerned first and foremost with the exercise of power. An example of the discord which these different attitudes can engender was provided by Iraq's decision not to commit herself to intervention on the guerrillas' side in the Jordan civil war and Aflaq's vehement criticism of them for this. Although there had previously been other disagreements on such questions as the Kurdish problem and collaboration with Communists, this one, being on an Arab national issue, touched a more sensitive spot and led to a <sup>ruffling</sup> ~~rupture~~ of relations between ~~the~~ Aflaq's group and the Iraqi Ba'ath. The quarrel

on the International Command

Reportedly



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~~International Command and the Iraqi Ba'ath.~~

~~The quarrel has so far not been patched up~~

~~and has~~ reportedly led to widespread defections

from the "Right-wing" Ba'ath in Jordan and

the Lebanon; *but apart from the continued estrangement of Aflaq himself it seems to have been patched up.*

Regional Branches of the Ba'ath Party

29. The Ba'ath Party has regional organisations in most other Arab countries - the Lebanon,

Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Libya,

Algeria, etc. Their membership is in most

cases small. Nowhere do they appear to pre-

sent an immediate threat to the existing

régime. The many disputes within the party

have had a confusing and demoralising effect

on the regional branches, *they tend to* ~~which regard the~~

~~establishments in Baghdad and Damascus with~~

~~suspicion and look more towards the Inter-~~

~~national Command.~~ *in fact* The Iraqis have been more

active than the Syrians in spreading their

influence, particularly in the Persian Gulf,

which they regard as their special hunting

ground; ~~their~~ claim to be a "legitimate"

Ba'athist régime and the backing given to

them by the International Command has given

them some advantage in this respect. ~~if the~~

~~rupture with the International Command is~~

~~permanent, they will lose this advantage.~~

The Ba'ath Régimes and the West

30. The Ba'ath's policies have generally been

*for guidance*

*Those of their members who are ideologically motivated tend to look towards the extreme party founders for guidance and to regard the establishment in Baghdad and Damascus with suspicion, but the most important question is presumably which Ba'athist centre will give them most material support.*

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though it is debatable whether those of any <sup>likely</sup> conceivable alternative regimes would have been ~~as~~ more beneficial.

or long-term

detrimental to Western interests, Diplomatic relations between HMG and Iraq, which had been severed at the time of the six-day war, were re-established in May 1968, shortly before the Ba'ath returned to power there. Although modest progress has since been made in the commercial and cultural fields, on oil, the most sensitive issue, very little has been achieved. The Ba'ath, despite its theoretical commitment to the <sup>nationalization</sup> ~~expropriation~~ of foreign oil ~~concerns, has not taken things any further than Qasim's~~ in terms of legislation ~~than the expropriation law introduced by 80 of Qasim in 1961~~ (which limited the activities of the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) to areas under production and thus deprived it of the major part of its concessionary areas) <sup>and Law 97 of 1967, empowering its National Oil Company</sup> ~~indications that some leading figures in the (INOC) to exploit the confiscated areas. Various régime wish to reach agreement with the IPC. Attempts have been made to promote a settlement with the IPC of resulting claims that law was passed, contracts have so far borne little fruit. yet been achieved.~~

31. Relations between HMG and Syria have remained severed since 1967. The neo-Ba'ath followed a tougher line than the Iraqis on oil questions, as on most others. After negotiations between Syria and the IPC on the question of increased transit dues had broken down in December 1966, they stopped the flow of oil through the company's pipeline to the

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Mediterranean until March 1967, when a new agreement was reached. The pipeline's operations were again disrupted at the time of the June war - this time as the result of action taken by the (non-Ba'athist) Iraq Government, acting in the knowledge that if it did not interrupt supplies to the West the Syrians would. Finally, when Tapline, the pipeline from Saudi Arabia to the Lebanese port of Sidon, was damaged in May 1970, the Syrian Government refused to allow repairs to be carried out to it. The new Government, however, agreed in December that talks should be held with a view to re-opening it. (In January 1971 the Syrians authorised the repair of Tapline and negotiated a new royalty agreement.)

Conclusions

32. In mid-1970 the Ba'ath Party presented a picture of two ~~faction-ridden, quasi-military~~ <sup>Ba'athist régimes operating</sup> ~~under the same ideological slogans and maintained régimes, divided from each other by national and other differences;~~ rival "International Commands" - the old command led by Aflaq lending some theoretical backing to the Iraq régime and receiving a subsidy from it but having little affinity with it, the other little more than a creation of the Syrian régime itself<sup>(1)</sup> and a number of weak subversive groups in other countries<sup>(2)</sup>, possessing differing inclinations and loyalties but on the whole looking more to the "orthodox" International Command than elsewhere.

in power by the same technique of intimidation and but divided by national and other differences and conspicuously hostile to each other;

~~The Syrian International Command was ousted by Assad in November 1970 and survives, theoretically, in exile in Beirut. Assad is believed to be planning the election of a new (Syrian) International Command. The ousted International Command ousted in November 1970 publishes a weekly paper Al-Rajah in Beirut, though its future is uncertain.~~

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(1) [Insert footnote opposite]  
- 24 -



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Draft.

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when appropriate.

*Typed* [Footnote to p. 24]

(1) This Syrian International Command was ousted by Assad in November 1970 and survives, theoretically, in exile in Beirut; Assad is believed to be planning the election of a new (Syrian) International Command. The International Command ousted in November 1970 publishes a weekly paper Ar-Raya in Beirut, but the future of this paper is at present (July 1971) in some doubt owing to recent bomb explosions at its offices and a reported printers' strike; the Syrian Government do not at present have a press outlet in Beirut. The Iraqi Ba'ath used to subsidise Al Ahrar, a Beirut paper edited by Aflaq, but they withdrew their subsidy early in 1971 and it ceased publication; they now support two Beirut dailies, Al Kifah and Beirut, and one weekly, Ahad.

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33. In the second half of the year, a time of crisis in the Middle East, the party itself went through several crises. In Syria the "neo-Ba'athist" group was ousted by a less doctrinaire Ba'athist group. In Iraq one prominent figure was expelled from the régime, and relations between the Iraq Regional Command and the International Command became severely strained. <sup>and Aflaq became estranged from it,</sup> but the régime seemed by the end of the year to have

consolidated its position.

34. The many divisions which have taken place within the party during the period under review have been caused in part by ideological disagreements but to a greater extent by personal, factional, sectarian and regional rivalries. That the rift between the two wings of the party in Syria and Iraq when the neo-Ba'ath were in power was not <sup>primarily</sup> the result of ideological differences alone seems to have been confirmed by the fact that relations between the two countries did not improve immediately after the neo-Ba'ath had gone.

35. Because of the complexities and inconsistencies of Ba'athist politics, such terms as "Left-wing" and "Right-wing", "extreme" and "moderate", are of limited value when applied to them, and can be misleading. <sup>(They have, however, been used in this memorandum for want of more appropriate terms.)</sup>

The terms "orthodox" and "neo-Ba'athist" are of some value in identifying the theoretical relationship of the régimes in Iraq and Syria respectively to the party founders during the period under review, but they too can be misleading.

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36. A major difficulty faced by the Ba'ath when in power has been the impossibility of its remaining there without the support of the army. The pattern of the party's relations with the officer class in Syria and Iraq is a tangled one, and the experience of the two countries has not been identical, but in both the alliance of civilian and military elements has produced strains within the ~~leadership~~ <sup>regimes which have been established.</sup>

In Syria, in both February 1966 and November 1970 the military faction of the leadership ousted the civilian faction. In Iraq ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

rivalry between civilian and military figures was in evidence during 1970 but the chief military figure of doubtful allegiance, Hardan Abdul Ghaffar al Tikriti, was dismissed in October and by the end of the year the ~~regime~~ <sup>party</sup>

appeared to have established a stranglehold over potential dissidents in the armed forces and elsewhere. In both countries the party's association with the military and its

determination to stay in power have resulted in ~~government by methods~~

~~something~~ not far removed from <sup>those of</sup> military dictatorship ~~and the neglect of the social-~~

democratic part of <sup>the party's</sup> ~~its~~ programme ~~has never~~

~~looked like being implemented.~~

~~like being implemented.~~

37. Another difficulty for the Ba'ath was, until quite recently, the impossibility of its coming to terms with Nasser. This took from under its feet the other main plank of its platform: Pan-Arabism. Now that both Nasser and the neo-Ba'ath have gone, Syria is seeking a closer accord with the UAR and certain other Arab states. But the basic ambivalence in her



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attitude to the UAR is likely to persist, and  
Iraq-UAR relations <sup>meanwhile</sup> remain clouded.

38. Although there has been a great gap between the theory and practice of Ba'athism and the party has become extremely disunited, it has nevertheless made its mark on the Middle East scene. Firstly, its organisation and determination have helped to place régimes in power in Syria and Iraq and keep them there. Secondly, the doctrinaire element in the Ba'athist régimes' make-up has imparted a greater rigidity to their attitudes than might otherwise have existed. This has shown itself equally in their policies towards Palestine, towards other Arab States, and towards the West. The Ba'ath's presence in the Middle East has thus served to heighten the tensions already existing there.

39. With the demise of the neo-Ba'athists in November 1970 and the introduction into the Syrian Government of a wider range of non-Ba'athist opinion, it appeared that Syria <sup>was</sup> intended to adopt a more flexible approach to her problems. She has already joined the embryo federation of the UAR, Libya and the Sudan <sup>(1)</sup> and this has led to speculation that she might associate herself with any further efforts made by the UAR to seek a peaceful

(and in April 1971  
Syria, the UAR and  
Libya declared their  
intention to form a  
new federation)

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(1) In April 1971 Syria, the UAR and Libya declared their intention to form a new federation.

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settlement of the Arab-Israel dispute. In public statements, however, Assad has continued to reject the idea.

40. Soviet influence in Syria and Iraq has increased while they have been under Ba'athist rule. The Ba'ath-Soviet relationship has not, *however,* been without its strains, notably over the key questions of the Arab confrontation of Israel and the supply of Soviet arms for this purpose. (It is the Arab-Israel dispute that has given the Soviet Union the opportunity to expand its influence in the Arab world to its present extent, but Soviet arms deliveries have often not kept pace with Arab demands.)

There have also been marked differences of opinion within the Ba'athist régimes as to how far the relationship should be allowed to go; this was one of the issues which led to the neo-Ba'athists' downfall. Although a tactical alliance with the Soviet Union may suit the Ba'ath, they can be expected to continue to retain a degree of independence from Soviet policies and to keep a rein on the activities of the local Communist parties.

41. The Ba'ath's rule has generally been detrimental to Western interests in the Middle East, *✓* Neither in Iraq nor in Syria has the party fulfilled its theoretical commitment

*though, in Iraq at least, it is doubtful whether any conceivable alternative régime would be more beneficial to Western interests to them.*

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To:—

Type 1 +

From

Telephone No. & Ext.

Department

to nationalise foreign oil concerns, but both countries have been difficult to deal with on oil questions in particular. The fall of the neo-Ba'ath brought to power in Syria a Ba'athist group which it was thought might prove less difficult to deal with than its predecessor. (This hope was to some extent borne out in January 1971, when the Syrians authorised the repair of Tapline and negotiated a new royalty agreement.) In Iraq, too, those who favoured a measure of realism, particularly in internal policies, seemed to be gaining ground over the doctrinaire elements in 1970.

Middle East Section

Research Department,

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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2/3

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
London S.W.1

Research Department  
Riverwalk House  
Millbank SW1

RR 6/21

1 February 1971

A C D S Macrae Esq  
BAGHDAD

The Ba'ath Party in Syria and Iraq,  
1964-70

I enclose a draft Research Department Memorandum on the Ba'ath Parties which has been written by our Middle East Section. We should welcome your comments.

I am also sending a copy to Given in Beirut.

E.E. Orchard

(Director of Research)

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No. RA 6/21

DRAFT Letters

Type 1 +

2  
3

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

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Unclassified.

To:—

- (1) Mr. A.C.D.S. Macrae  
(Baghdad)  
(2) Mr. E.F. Gissen  
(Beirut)

From

M..E.E. Dickand

Telephone No. & Ext.

MA 218

Department

Director of Research

PRIVACY MARKING

In Confidence

The Ba'ath Party in Syria and Iraq, 1964-70

I enclose a draft Research Dept.  
Ba'ath Parties which has  
Memorandum on the ~~above~~ ~~on which~~ ~~are~~  
our Middle East Section. We  
been written by should welcome your comments. ~~be~~

I am also sending a copy to  
{ [1] Gissen in Beirut.  
{ [2] Macrae in Baghdad.

8  
2



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Reference.....

Mr. Ouchard ✓  
Mr. Banerjee ✓  
Mr. Amintage ✓

I attach a second draft  
of RR 6/21 "The Ba'ath Party in Syria  
May, 1964-1970" which has been  
devised with N.E.D. & which has been  
prepared by Mr. Rumble.

2. Subject to any comment  
you may have, I suggest this draft  
is sent to Baghdad and Beirut  
for comment.

M.E. Satcha.

I have no comment at the present  
stage. Will you let me have a draft later



Memo. Mactae & Given (or whoever  
you think appropriate) explaining the  
circumstances, please. Then it can go to  
Can I have the lib or another copy to  
read at home?

29).

Spare copy passed to printer

12.



Mr. Bannerman

THE BA'ATH PARTY IN SYRIA AND IRAQ, 1964-1970

I submit a new draft of this paper, which has been cleared with Near Eastern Department and Oil Department. I suggest that it should be sent for comments to Baghdad and Beirut.



(C.J.S. Rundle)

21 January 1971



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*ple enter & 6.0*  
*Mr Bannister* *(A)*



BRITISH EMBASSY

BEIRUT

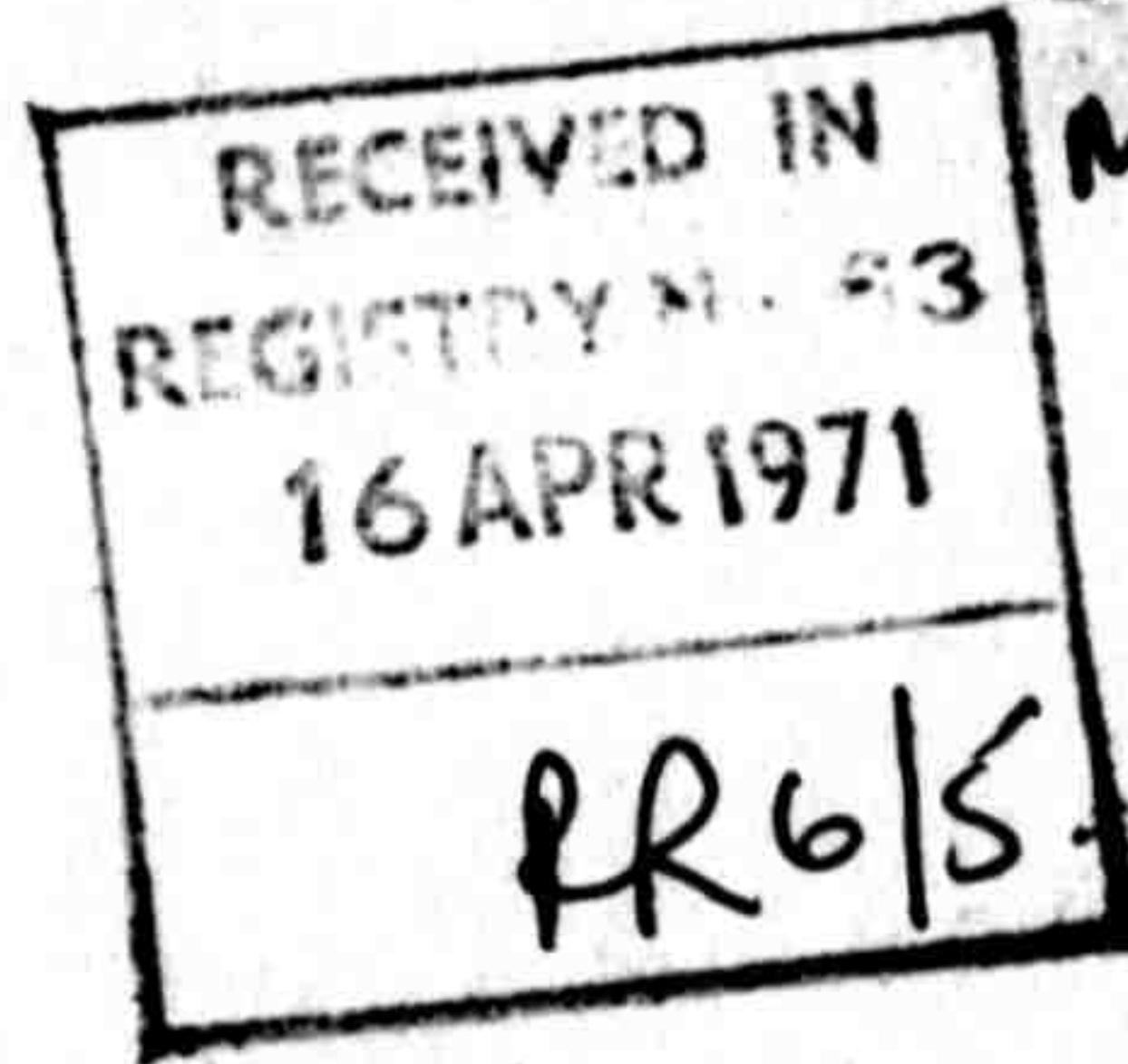
*19/4*

RR 6/21

2/14

E E Orchard Esq CBE  
Director of Research  
Research Department

8 April 1971



*Mr Rydell*

*p.a. CR 20/4*

*Dear Ted,*

# THE BA'ATH PARTY IN SYRIA AND IRAQ 1964-70

*(3)*

I am extremely sorry to have kept you waiting so long for our comments on the draft memorandum on the Ba'ath Parties enclosed with your letter of 1 Feb.

2. The paper seems to us excellent and we have no amendments to suggest.

*All good wishes*

*(Baird has advantages over Norman!)*

*Yours*

*John*  
E E Given

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No. RA 6/21

DRAFT letter

Type 1 + 2

24/9.50

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

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Secret.  
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Unclassified.

To: The Chancery  
British Embassy  
Baghdad

From

J. Schmidt  
Telephone No. & Ext.

Department

Research

PRIVACY MARKING

.....In Confidence

Dear Chancery

The Ba'ath Party in Syria and Iraq,  
1964-70

May we now have your comments  
on the draft Research Dept. Memorandum  
on the above under cover of  
Orchard's letter of 1 Feb. to Macrae.

Yours Ever,

Research Dept. Jea  
21/5





**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**  
London SW1



Telephone 01-

The Chancery  
British Embassy  
BAGHDAD

Your reference

Our reference  
RR 6/21

Date  
27 May 1971

Dear Chancery

THE BA'ATH PARTY IN SYRIA AND IRAQ 1964-70

May we now have your comments on the draft  
Research Department Memorandum on the above  
sent under cover of Orchard's letter of  
1 February to Macrae.

Yours ever

Research Department



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BRITISH EMBASSY

BAGHDAD

2/10

E E Orchard Esq CBE  
Research Department  
FCO  
LONDON SW1



4 June 1971

*Mr. B. [unclear] Minute 21/8*  
*9 am - a little disturbed at the number of divergences of opinion & points described as misleading. Could we have a word when you have formulated your amendments?*  
*tl/6*

*Desired,*

# THE BA'ATH PARTY IN SYRIA AND IRAQ, 1964/70

1. I am sorry it has taken us such an unconscionable time to collate our comments on the draft memorandum enclosed with your letter RR 6/21 of 1 February. Here they are at last.

2. Passim (especially para 35).

I think everyone would agree that the terminology currently used to refer to rival Ba'athist groups - "left-wing", "right-wing", "orthodox", "neo-Ba'athist", etc - is unsatisfactory. (See, for example, the correspondence between this post and Eastern Department resting with Bertie Saunders' letter of 27 September 1968 - Eastern Department's file E1/1.) The difficulty is to find anything better. Since the differences between the regimes in Damascus and Baghdad are always primarily nationalist and not doctrinaire, it would be more meaningful, if clumsy, to refer to them as "the Syrian Ba'ath under X", "the Iraqi Ba'ath under Y", etc, reserving the term "orthodox" for Aflaq and any of the Party founders and stalwarts still associated with him. If this is not acceptable, I suppose we must rest content with existing terms as long as they are always put in inverted commas. But even so it seems to us begging the question to refer to Assad's coup in Syria as "the ousting of the neo-Ba'athists". Assad's regime is still explicitly Ba'athist, even though he himself may not think in either very abstract or doctrinaire terms; and if his regime is not "neo-Ba'athist", then some other term must surely be found. Para 35 (or something like it) should go somewhere at the beginning of the paper.

## Paragraph F of Summary and Paragraphs 26 to 28

We find the account of the International Command and its vicissitudes misleading. Firstly, the International Command (recognised by the Iraqi Ba'ath) consists of Aflaq as Secretary-General, 3 Syrians, 3 Lebanese, 3 Iraqis and tame representatives of the Sudan, Jordan, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia, all 4 located in Baghdad. Though in a sense led by "a group of French educated Levantine intellectuals" it is largely a puppet of the Iraqi regime, which finances it. Secondly, although the quarrel of last autumn arising out of the Jordan civil war ruffled relations between Aflaq's stalwarts and the Iraqi Ba'ath, it is too strong to speak of a continuing rupture between the International Command as such and the Iraqis. The 2

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principal Syrian members of the Command, Aisami and Farah, and the principal Lebanese, Rafi'i, frequently appear in public here, especially Aisami, who has been granted oracular status in the government-controlled media's handling of his (frequent) statements. And the Command appears to meet here at intervals and to continue its function of legitimising the Iraqi regime, despite the absence of Aflaq. Perhaps the last 5 lines of paragraph 28 might read:

"..... a ~~sufficing~~ of relations between Aflaq's group on the International Command and the Iraqi Ba'ath. The quarrel reportedly led to widespread defections from the "right-wing" Ba'ath in Jordan and the Lebanon; but apart from the continued estrangement of Aflaq himself, the quarrel seems to have been patched-up."

Incidentally, does the rival (Syrian) International Command (which is not mentioned in the Summary) still theoretically exist since Assad's coup? We gather from the Beirut press that there are certainly plans to revive it. If so, a good deal of friction is bound to be generated with the Iraqi-backed "National (ie pan-Arab) Command".

#### Paragraph 3

A tiny point of detail on the last sentence: it might read

"(In 1967 he escaped and has been living in exile, mainly in Iraq)".

#### Paragraphs 4 to 7

Though this is not perhaps for us to say, these paragraphs in our view overdo the Alawite angle. Indeed, the last sentence of paragraph 7 scarcely makes sense since Assad himself is an Alawite.

#### Paragraph 9

As a matter of historical detail, are we not right in stating that in October 1968 Atassi, Zu'ain and Makhos retained with Jadid himself the top 4 places on the Regional Command, which is where power lay, even if 2 of them were dropped from the Cabinet?

#### Paragraph 12

We should surely hesitate to describe General Hardan al Tikriti as a Ba'athist. It was largely because he was not one that he was ousted and finally assassinated. Perhaps para 21 of the Research Department Memorandum of 5 February 1970 on the Iraqi Ba'ath (July 1968 - January 1970) is misleading on this score. (Incidentally I am surprised that there is no reference to this paper in the preamble.)

#### Paragraph 13

We would not agree that the Iraqi regime was ever "a divided one". Whatever internal tensions there may be, the guiding principle of the Iraqi Ba'ath is that it must stick together to survive. Later in this paragraph Saddam Hussain is wrongly referred to as Secretary-General of the Regional Command (he is the Deputy); and if you must describe him as a doctrinaire, he should also be credited with ruthless pragmatism. The last part of the paragraph now, of course, requires up-dating.

I have put a footnote to para 32. (See Beirut letter 24 June) CR



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Paragraph 14

The tentative conclusion that the differences between the Syrian and Iraqi regimes "were more regional than ideological in substance" seems to us an under-statement as well as semantically obscure. As mentioned already, the fact surely is that the fundamental cause of their disagreement is straightforward national rivalry of a millennial kind. Doctrinal differences are scarcely identifiable at all and their respective attitudes to the UAR over this period reflect their tactical attempts to gain ascendancy over each other in the field of international Arab posturing.

Paragraph 17

It is misleading to describe the inclusion of Kurdish ministers in the Iraqi government since 1970 (which has in any case no Cabinet) as having been for "purely presentational reasons". Their appointment was bound up with the major issue of Iraqi/Kurdish relations and was required by the terms of the Kurdish Peace Settlement.

Paragraphs 18 and 19

The expression "opposing factions within the Party" seems obscure here. The next part of the sentence and the first sentence of paragraph 19 appear to repeat themselves.

Paragraph 20

In the last sentence of the paragraph the term, neo-Ba'athist, appears for once to include Assad's lot. See above.

Paragraph 23

For reasons already stated, we would prefer this to read: "Relations between the Ba'ath in Syria and Iraq have been strained, partly because they have represented different tendencies within the Party but much more because of national rivalry. As a cover for this national rivalry, the neo-Ba'athists ....."

Paragraph 25

We here know of no good reason why so many commentators should have predicted an improvement in Iraq/Syrian relations after Assad came to power and would prefer the first sentence to be watered down. Similarly we should like to see the second sentence begin: "But, again because of nationalist rivalry between Damascus and Baghdad, Iraq's immediate reaction ....."

Paragraph 26

See our comments above on the International Command. The second sentence might be clearer if it read; "After the "neo-Ba'athist" coup in 1966, which involved the expulsion of Aflaq and other members of the old-guard, the existing International Command was naturally estranged ....."

Paragraph 27

This seems to us, for reasons already stated, to need some amendment to take account of the fact that the International Command's activities in Iraq are largely window-dressing by the regime which pays for them. Aflaq's estrangement has consequently had little practical effect here.



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Paragraph 29

The fourth sentence no doubt ought to be true; but is it? Such members of regional organisations elsewhere as are ideologically motivated may look to the Party founders for guidance; but the rest must surely look to whatever Ba'athist centre gives them most material support. The last sentence in the paragraph would be better omitted.

Paragraph 30

We would suggest the following re-draft of the last 2 sentences: "The Ba'ath, despite its theoretical or long-term commitment to the nationalisation of foreign oil concerns, has not - in terms of legislation - taken things further than Qasim's Law 80 of 1961 (which limited the activities of the IPC to areas under production and thus deprived it of the major part of its concessionary areas) and Law 97 of 1967, empowering its National Oil Company (INOC) to exploit the confiscated areas. Various attempts have been made to promote a settlement with the IPC of resulting claims and counter-claims, but little progress has yet been achieved."

Paragraph 32

✓ We do not like the first part of the sentence at all and suggest instead: "..... a picture is presented of 2 Ba'athist regimes operating under the same ideological slogans and maintained in power by the same technique of intimidation but divided by national and other differences and conspicuously hostile to each other: rival .....". It might be worth adding a sentence about the splits in the party press outlets in Beirut too. As I understand it, the Iraqis withdrew their subsidy from Al Ahrar, which was edited by Aflaq, earlier this year and have chosen as their alternative vehicle Al Kifah. Aflaq's paper has consequently had to close down through lack of funds.

Paragraph 33

See comments above on Hardan al Tikriti and on the International Command.

Paragraph 36

Certainly the Ba'ath, like any other regime in Iraq, depends on the backing of well placed elements within the armed forces. But I do not think it true to say the regime has "tended to separate into civilian and military factions". What has happened is that the Party has, by wholesale penetration and intimidation, established a stranglehold over potential dissidents in the armed forces (or anywhere else). This process has the support of the principal military figures in the regime - though no doubt most of the officer cadre as a whole resent it (as did Hardan al Tikriti). If you do feel obliged to note desperate trends within the Iraqi Ba'ath, I would bank on "doctrinaire" and "pragmatic" as being 2 more handy adjectives.

Paragraph 40

To the second sentence, you might add "and also over the treatment of domestic communists".



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Paragraph 41

The opening sentence surely evades the question. The real issue, at least as far as Iraq is concerned, is whether any conceivable alternative regime would be more beneficial to western interests or strong enough to reverse the drift towards dependence upon the communist bloc which has become so marked in recent years. We ourselves doubt whether there is an Iraqi Suharto hovering in the background.

3. I enclose, in case it is of any interest, a combined list I have been trying to compile of the membership of the 3 main organs of the party, to wit -

a The Regional (ie Iraqi) Command of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party (described wrongly, I think in the annex to RD Memorandum of 5 February<sup>1970</sup>, as the "Regional Command Council"

b the Revolutionary Command Council, which is virtually, but not quite, identical with the Regional Command<sup>and</sup>, which is in effect the highest executive body in Iraq under the present regime.

c The National (ie pan Arab) Command of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party (Iraqi version). I am not convinced that the first and third of these are quite up to date, and hope to be able to cross-check them soon. If alterations prove necessary, I will let you know.

*Yours ever,  
Christopher MacRae.*

A C D S MacRae

Copied to: E F Given Esq CMG  
Beirut

S L Egerton Esq  
Near Eastern Dept  
FCO





MEMBERSHIP OF THE (IRAQI) BA'ATH. MAY 1971

1. Regional (ie Iraqi) Command of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party

Ahmad Hassan al Bakr	Secretary General
Saddam Hussain al Tikriti	Deputy Secretary General
Salih Mehdi Ammash	Member
Abdul Karim Abdul	"
Sattar al Shaikhli	"
Izzat Mustafa	"
Abdul Khaliq al Samarra'ie	"
Izzat al Duri	"
Murtadha al Hadithi	"
Taha al Jazrawi	"
Naim Haddad	"
Samir al-Najim	"
Tayeh Abdul Karim	"
Mohammed Fadhel	"

2. Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council

Field-Marshal Ahmad Hasan al Bakr	President of the Republic
Sd Saddam Husain	Vice-Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council - Deputy Secretary - General of the Regional Leadership of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party
General Saleh Mehdi Ammash	Vice-President of the Republic
* General Hammad Shihab	Minister of Defence
* General Sa'dun Ghaidan	Minister of the Interior
Sd Abdul Karim Abdul Sattar al-Shaikhli	Minister of Foreign Affairs - Member of the Regional Leadership of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party
Dr Izzat Mustafa	Minister of Health - Member of the Regional Leadership of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party
Sd Abdul Khaliq al Samarra'ie	Member of the Regional Leadership of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party
Sd Izzat al Duri	Minister of Agrarian Reform - Member of the Regional Leadership of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party
Sd Murtadha al Hadithi	Minister of Labour and Social Affairs - Member of the Regional Leadership of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party
Sd Taha al Jazrawi	Minister of Industry - Member of the Regional Leadership of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party

Colonel Shafiq Hammudi al Daraji

Secretary-General of the Revolutionary Command Council

Sd Tahir Tawfiq al 'Ani

Secretary to the Secretary-General of the Revolutionary Command Council

\* Not members of the Regional Command





3. The National (ie pan Arab) Command of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party - Iraqi version

Michel Aflaq		Secretary General
Shibli al Aisami	}	Syria
Elias Farah		
Dr Zaid Haider		
Abdul Majid al Rifa'i	}	Lebanon
Nicols al Farzali		
Radhi Farhat		
Ahmad Hasan al Bakr	}	Iraq
Saleh Mehdi Ammash		
Abdul Karim Abdul Sattar al Shaikhli		
Muhammad Sulaiman		Sudan
Kamal Fakhuri		Jordan
Umar Sahimi		Tunisia
Ali Channam		Saudi Arabia



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*I have referred to both these points in a footnote to para 32.*

*CSF:sk  
20/6*



BRITISH EMBASSY

BEIRUT

24 June 1971

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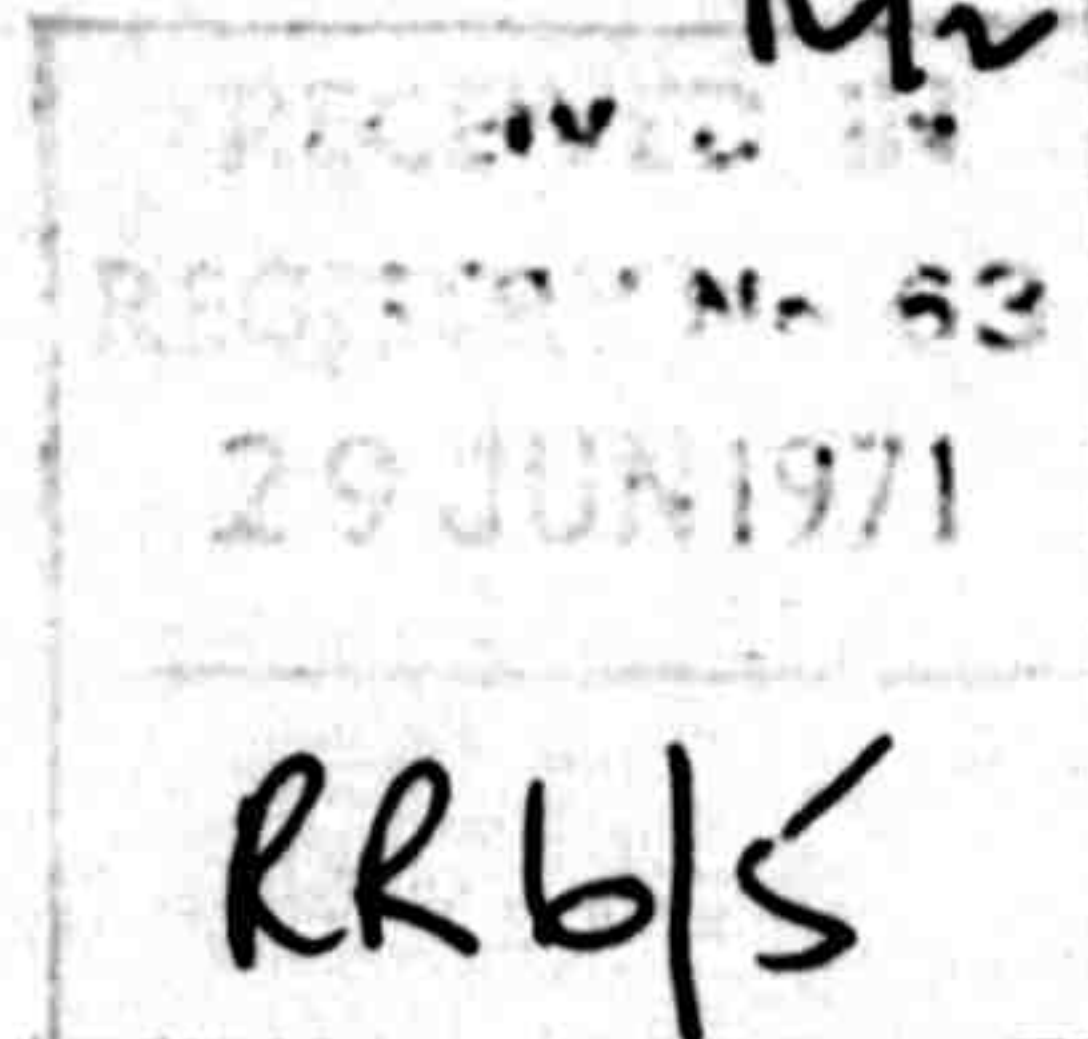
*(7)*

2/14

*p.a. dr 3/8*

E E Orchard Esq CBE  
Research Dept  
Foreign & Commonwealth Office

*29/6  
Mr Banner  
Mr Russell*



*Dear Orchard,*

*(6)*

THE BA'ATH PARTY IN SYRIA AND IRAQ 1964-70

1. In his letter 2/10 of 4 June to you Christopher MacRae asked about the Syrian International Command of the Ba'ath party. This Command was ousted by Hafez el Asad in November 1970 and survives, theoretically, in exile in Beirut. Asad is believed to be planning the election of a new (Syrian) International Command although no official announcement on the subject has been made.

2. We agree with MacRae that some mention might be made in paragraph 32 of your paper of the Ba'ath press outlets in Beirut. Al Ahrar has indeed ceased publication, and the Iraqi Ba'ath now support two dailies, Al Kifah and Beirut, and one weekly, Ahad. The ousted International Command of the Syrian Ba'ath (pro Salah Jedid) publishes ar-Rayah as a weekly (it was formerly a daily). However, following two recent bomb explosions at the paper's offices, the printers are reported to have gone on strike and the paper's future must therefore be considered doubtful. The Syrian Government do not at present have a press outlet in Beirut;

*Yours sincerely  
A J Sindall*

A J Sindall

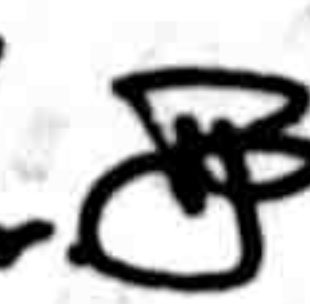
COPIED TO:

A C D S MacRae Esq  
BAGHDAD

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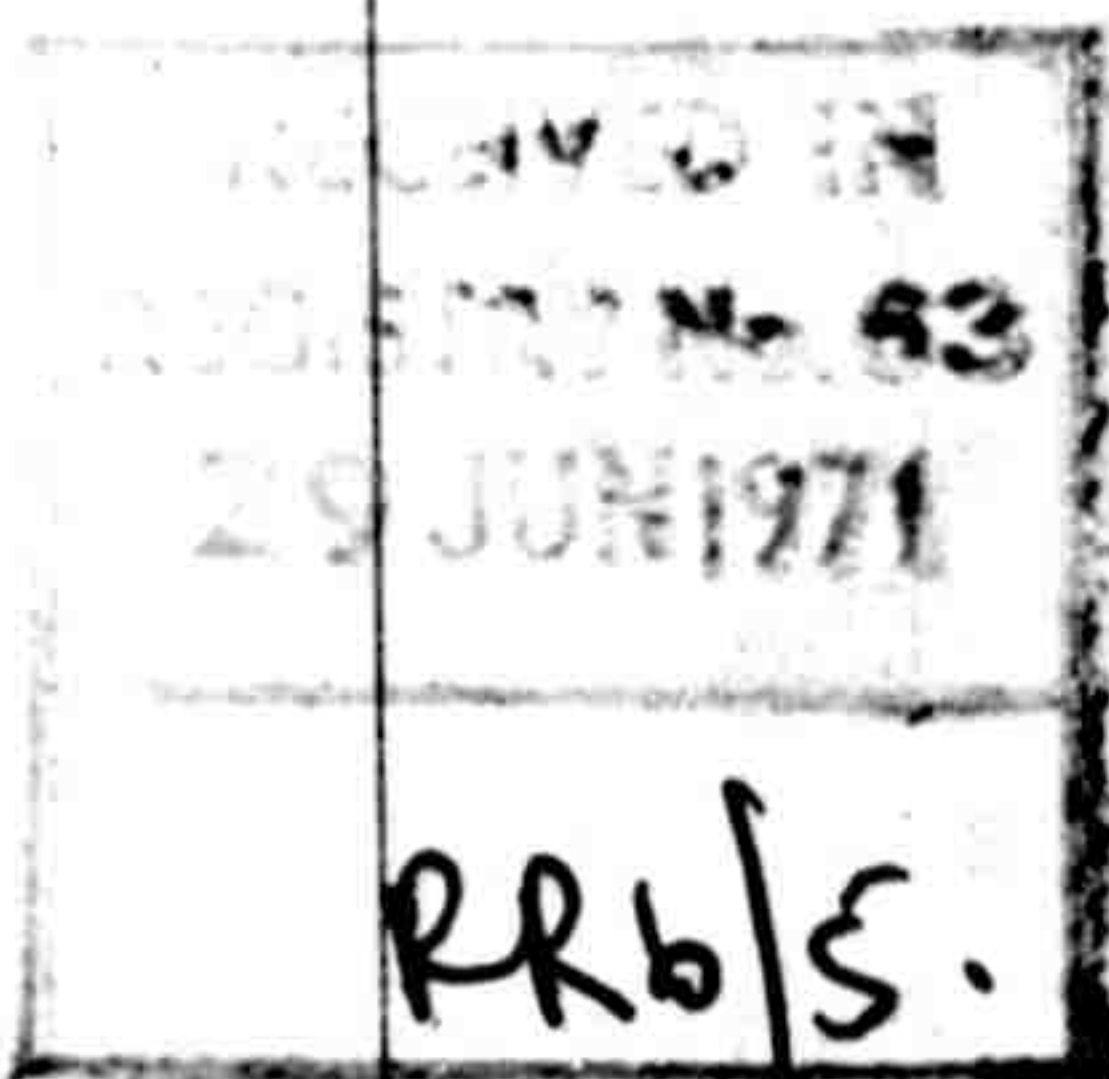


Mr. Bannerman ✓ 

MR. MACRAE'S LETTER OF 4 JUNE

1. Mr. Egerton has seen a copy of Mr. MacRae's letter but does not require to see the draft memorandum again.
2. There are bound to be differences of opinion over such a complicated subject as Ba'athism, but Mr. MacRae's differences with us are not as great as they may seem at first sight.
3. His main point concerning Ba'athism in Iraq represents an updating of the draft. He speaks of a trend towards a united régime in which the pragmatists have gained ground over the doctrinaire extremists, not a divided régime split into military and civilian wings. This is a trend that could at best be only faintly discerned last autumn, when the first draft of the paper was prepared; in the summer of 1970 all observers, including the Embassy itself, were referring to differences between civilian and military figures within the régime, and Hardan Tikriti's dismissal in October 1970 represented the strengthening of the grip of the civilian party members over the régime. I have therefore thought it best to take in Mr. MacRae's point but also to retain, in amended form, the conclusion in paragraph 36 that the alliance of Ba'athist groups with the military in order to come to power has led to a tendency for Ba'athist régimes to be split on civilian-military lines.
4. One of his other main points, i.e. that national rivalry and not ideological differences are what divides the Iraqi Ba'ath from the Syrian Ba'ath, in fact re-enforces our own conclusions.
5. My detailed comments on the points made in his letter are as follows:

/Passin





Passim and para 35

The point of writing the paper was partly to examine the extent to which the terminology used to describe Ba'athist groups was relevant or accurate. It would therefore be self-defeating to jettison it completely. I think the terms "orthodox" and "neo-Ba'athist" in particular should be retained as they have not only been widely used but also have the advantage of showing clearly the theoretical relationship ~~between~~ <sup>of</sup> the ~~main~~ <sup>main</sup> two Ba'athist groups of the period 1966-1970 ~~and~~ <sup>to</sup> the old guard led by Aflaq (i.e. those who are allied ~~to~~ <sup>with</sup> him may consider themselves "orthodox"). I have added a footnote as suggested, but I think we should retain para 35. I think it is fair to talk of the ousting of the neo-Ba'athists in 1970: Assad's régime is Ba'athist, not neo-Ba'athist; but I don't think we should confuse the issue further by inventing a new term for it.

F and paras 26-28

The passages in the draft were based on Mr. Balfour Paul's letter 1/8 of 14 November; Mr. MacRae's comments help us to see the quarrel in perspective.

Para 3

Amended.

Paras 4-7

The general comment on the Alawite angle is debatable. The specific comment on Assad misses the point that, although he had differences of opinion with Jadid ~~and~~ <sup>as</sup> almost from the beginning, he waited four years before bringing matters to a head. I have altered the last sentence in para 7 and added the words "seems to have" in the last sentence of para 4.

Para 9

This is only partly true. Ultimately power in these cases "lies with the men who have the following in the party and the army to make their demands effective." (Phebe Ann Marr, writing in Orbis, Vol. XIV No. 3 of Fall 1970). October 1968 does seem to have marked the beginning of Assad's ascendancy.

Para 12

One may argue over the extent to which Tikriti was a Ba'athist, but it cannot be denied that he was a prominent figure under the Ba'athist régimes of both 1963 and 1968, which is all this paragraph says.



Para 13

See para 2 of this Minute. I have made some amendments.

Para 17

This observation was inserted by Mr. Hinchcliffe when he was in Near Eastern Department. I have deleted it.

Paras 18 and 19

"Opposing factions" refers back to para 14. I have added the words "in Syria" to make this clearer.

Para 20

The term "neo-Ba'ath" refers to the régime of February 1966 - November 1970. Assad was a part of it, though his attitude was not typical of the neo-Ba'athists and he eventually overthrew the régime.

Paras 23, 25, 29, 30, 32, 33

Amended. I have ~~not~~ referred to the press as suggested in para 32, ~~as (a) the cut-off date for the paper is the end of 1970, except for a few observations in brackets or in footnotes which seemed essential, and (b) we have not enough information to be sure that anything we say reflects the situation accurately.~~

Para 36

Amended. But see my comments on para 13, above.

Para 40

Not added: it would be difficult to slip this in here, and the last sentence in the paragraph refers to the matter.

Para 41 (and para 30)

Amended. This is a fair point, though it does not perhaps entirely square with para 10 of the 1970 Annual Review, in which HM Ambassador speculated on "what Iraq might be like under a different régime".

*C.J.S. Rundle*

(C.J.S. Rundle)

22 June 1971

(See also  
Sindall's letter of  
24 June from  
Beirut.)



Original

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No. RR 6/5

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Unclassified.

To:—

(RR 6/5)

(16 August 1971)

From

Telephone No. & Ext.

Department

DEPARTMENTAL  
SERIES No 11

PRIVACY MARKING

.....In Confidence

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

THE BA'ATH PARTY IN SYRIA AND IRAQ

1964-1970

SUMMARY

A. Introduction. Ba'athist régimes have been in power in Syria since 1963 and in Iraq since July 1968. (Paragraph 1).

B. In February 1966 the moderate, or "orthodox", Ba'ath régime in Syria led by President Hafiz was ousted by a group of extremists, or "neo-Ba'athists", <sup>who</sup> ~~There~~ nearly all belonged to the Alawite and Druze <sup>extreme</sup> minority sects. At home they favoured Left-wing policies; abroad they favoured closer cooperation with Communist countries and isolation from the UAR. After a time a power struggle began within the leadership between General Jadid, the Assistant Secretary-General of the Syrian Ba'ath Party, and General Assad, the Minister of Defence. The former favoured "neo-Ba'athist" policies and the latter more specifically Arab policies. In November 1970 Assad seized power. The Government which he then formed was

1.

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and many of  
them leaned  
heavily towards  
Marxism

Many of them  
leaned heavily  
towards Marxism.



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predominantly Ba'athist. In November 1970 it acceded to the tripartite declaration on federal unity made earlier by the UAR, Libya and the Sudan (and in April 1971 Syria, Libya and the UAR declared their intention to form a new federation of Arab republics). (Paragraphs 2-11).

C. In July 1968 a "Right-wing", or "orthodox", Ba'athist group led by some of those who had been in power in 1963 seized power in Iraq. There have since been tensions within the Iraqi régime, including rivalry between civilian and military figures, but by the end of 1970 the one military figure of doubtful allegiance had been dismissed and the party had consolidated its position to the extent that it felt able to relax its internal policies slightly. (Paragraphs 12-13).

*1D.*  
~~D. A comparison of policies shows that the~~  
disagreements between the "neo-Ba'athist" and  
"orthodox" wings of the Ba'ath party between 1968 and  
1970 were caused by national rivalry between Syria and  
Iraq much more than doctrinal differences. *thus*  
Ba'athists' initial extremism was moderated when they  
had been in power for a time; *while* they expanding relations  
with Communist countries, *they* ~~but~~ allowed the Syrian  
Communist Party little room for manoeuvre; *and* Expediency  
~~led them to adopt a conciliatory attitude to the UAR.~~



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D. A comparison of policies shows that the disagreements between the "neo-Ba'athist" and "orthodox" wings of the Ba'ath party between 1968 and 1970 were caused by national rivalry between Syria and Iraq much more than by doctrinal differences. ~~Thus~~ In Syria the neo-Ba'athists' initial extremism was moderated when they had been in power for a time. While expanding relations with Communist countries, they allowed the Syrian Communist Party little room for manoeuvre, and although one of their main points of difference with the preceding régime had been its attempts at rapprochement with the UAR they too eventually adopted a conciliatory attitude towards Nasser, trying not to stand too openly in opposition to him in Arab affairs. Pressure from Cairo was instrumental in bringing to an end the crisis in Syrian-Lebanese relations over the guerrilla question in 1969, and the restrained nature of Syria's opposition to the American peace initiative in 1970 was equally a by-product of her desire not to step too far out of line with the UAR. The so-called "orthodox" régime in Iraq, ~~however~~ <sup>on the other hand,</sup> pursued a policy of isolation from the UAR and other Arab states despite its theoretical commitment to Pan-Arabism, and indulged in a bitter propaganda war with Nasser after he had accepted the American peace initiative in 1970. It too, like Syria, fostered

/close



close relations with the Soviet Union.

(Paragraphs 14-22).

/E.

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~~The so-called "orthodox" régime in Iraq, on the other hand, pursued a policy of isolation from the UAR and other Arab States despite its theoretical commitment to Pan-Arabism. It too fostered close relations with the Soviet Union (Paragraphs 14-22).~~

E. Relations between the Ba'athist régimes in Syria and Iraq have been poor and characterised by rivalry. The ousting of the "neo-Ba'athists" in Syria in November 1970 seemed to hold out the prospect of an improvement in relations between the two countries, but little immediate improvement took place. (Paragraphs 23-25).

F. The International Command, in theory the highest authority of the Ba'ath Party, was estranged from the Syrian régime after the "neo-Ba'athist" coup and transferred its headquarters to Baghdad when the Ba'ath came to power there in 1968. Its activities in Iraq have been largely window-dressing for the régime, which pays for them. Relations between it and the régime have not been entirely smooth. (Paragraphs 26-28).

G. The Ba'ath Party has regional branches in most other Arab countries. Nowhere do they appear to present an immediate threat to the existing régime. The Iraqi Ba'ath has been more active than the Syrian in spreading its influence, particularly in the Persian Gulf. (Paragraph 29).

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H. The Ba'ath's policies have generally been detrimental to Western interests in the Middle East, particularly where oil has been concerned. There are indications, however, that the new Syrian régime will prove more flexible than the neo-Ba'athists were. (Paragraphs 30-31).

I. The many divisions which have taken place within the Ba'ath Party have been due less to ideological disagreements than to personal, factional, sectarian and national rivalries. There has been a wide gap between the theory and practice of Ba'athism. The realities of Arab politics have meant that the Ba'athist régimes have not implemented the social-democratic part of the party's programme; instead they have ruled by dictatorial methods. Rivalry with Nasser was one obstacle to the implementation of Pan-Arab policies, and national rivalries remain now that he has gone. (Paragraphs 32-37).

J. The party has nevertheless made its mark on the Middle East, both in that it has placed régimes in power in Syria and Iraq and kept them there and in that the doctrinaire Ba'athist element in these régimes' make-up has imparted a greater rigidity to their attitudes than might otherwise have existed. (Since the



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demise of the "neo-Ba'athists" in November 1970, however, Syria has shown signs of adopting a more flexible attitude to her problems, and in 1970 the Iraqi régime displayed a greater measure of realism in internal policies than previously.) (Paragraphs 38-39).

K. Soviet influence in Syria and Iraq has increased under Ba'athist rule, but the Ba'athist régimes can be expected to retain a degree of independence from Soviet policies and to keep a rein on local Communist activities. (Paragraph 40).

Note: The full paper has been circulated to command with a known interest in the details. Copies are available on request.

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Introduction

Research Department Memoranda LR 6/13 of 1961 and LR 6/3 of 1964 traced the development of the Arab Socialist Renaissance Party (the Ba'ath) from 1958 up to the end of 1963, the year in which the party gained power in Syria and Iraq <sup>though it</sup> ~~but~~ lost it again in <sup>1970</sup> ~~the~~ latter after only nine months' rule. The present paper examines the main features of the party's development since then. In particular, it analyses the differences between the "orthodox" wing of the party - represented by the Syrian régime of 1963-1966 and by the present Iraqi régime, which has been in power since July 1968 - and the "neo-Ba'athist" group which ruled Syria from February 1966 to November 1970.<sup>(1)</sup> The position of the new, predominantly Ba'athist, Government formed in Syria in November 1970 is also discussed.

The Ba'ath in Syria, 1964-1970

2. After the demise of the Ba'ath in Iraq in November 1963, Syria became the focus of Ba'athist power. During 1963 the Syrian Ba'ath Party had been divided on various issues; chief among these was the possibility

(1) The terminology used to refer to Ba'athist groups - "Left-wing", "Right-wing", "neo-Ba'athist", "orthodox", etc. - is not entirely satisfactory and can be misleading. The terms "orthodox" and "neo-Ba'athist" have, however, been used in this memorandum because of their widespread use during the period 1966-1970 and because they are of value in identifying the theoretical relationships of the régimes in Iraq and Syria respectively to the party founders during that period. Since the differences between the régimes in Baghdad and Damascus are primarily nationalist, and since the "neo-Ba'ath" no longer rule in Syria, it should normally be sufficient in future to refer to the groups in power in the two countries as "the Iraqi Ba'ath" and "the Syrian Ba'ath".

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of unity with the UAR, which, however, receded after an attempted Nasserist coup had been foiled in July. By the end of the year General Amin al Hafiz had emerged as the most powerful figure in the ruling group, thanks less to sponsorship within the party than to the support of the army, many officers of which were not party members. He showed himself gifted at conciliation and manipulation of the conflicting factions among the civilians and the military alike.

3. By 1965, however, a split had appeared within the party between the moderate, or "orthodox", Ba'athists and a group of extremists, or "neo-Ba'athists". The moderates were represented by Hafiz himself, Michel Aflaq and Salah al Din Bitar, the two founders of the party, and Dr. Munif al Razzaz, a Jordanian who succeeded Aflaq as Secretary-General of the International Ba'ath Party in 1965. The "neo-Ba'athists" were led by General Salah al Jadid, who as Chief of Staff had the support of the bulk of the army. In the autumn Hafiz, in an effort to establish the primacy of himself and the civilians over the armed forces, set up a five-man Presidential Council, of which he was both the President and the only military member. At the same time he emasculated the National Council of the Revolutionary Command, which had previously been the supreme authority, by enlarging it from 24 to 95 members, the great majority of whom were civilians. (The theoretical justification for this was that its base was broadened by the inclusion of

The differences between them are described below.

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representatives of the peasants, the trade unions, the professional classes, etc.).

There followed a struggle for power between the International Command of the Ba'ath Party, sympathetic to Hafiz, and the (Syrian) Regional Command, which was dominated by Jadid. This was decided temporarily in Hafiz's favour in December, when he dissolved the Regional Command and transferred its powers to the International Command. But in February 1966 Jadid's supporters launched a successful coup, as a result of which Aflaq, Bitar and Razzaz left the country and Hafiz was imprisoned.

(In 1967 he escaped and since then he has been living in exile, mainly in Iraq.)

4. The February 1966 coup resulted in the replacement of one civilian-military Ba'athist team by another, but one in which the army were more dominant than previously and one whose outlook was substantially different from that of its predecessor. The "neo-Ba'athists" were younger and more radical than Hafiz and his associates. Nearly all belonged to the Alawite and Druze heterodox Muslim sects, which constitute less than 15 per cent of the Syrian population but which, for historical reasons, have a much higher representation in the armed forces. (1)

Resenting the Sunni Muslims' monopoly of power,

(1)

See Research Department Memorandum: The Political Activity of the Alawites and Druzes in Syria (LR 6/48 of 1966).

3.

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they carried their sectarian outlook to one of the main political issues in Syria, the question of relations with the UAR. Fearing that closer ties between the two countries would result in increased Sunni domination, as had been the case during the union of 1958-1961, they regarded Hafiz's intermittent efforts at rapprochement with Nasser with the utmost suspicion, even though it does not seem to have been his intention to do more than establish a modus vivendi with him. This, as much as any other policy issue, seems to have provided the immediate motive for the coup.

5. Other differences of policy also existed between the two groups, notably concerning the linked questions of socialism and relations with the Communist world. Differences had long existed within the Ba'ath Party as to the form that Arab socialism should take and the speed with which it should be implemented. The neo-Ba'athists, ~~athists~~, who were young, inexperienced politically, and, in the case of the Alawites at least, tended to regard the Sunnis as feudal oppressors, leaned heavily towards Marxism and favoured extreme Left-wing policies at home and further expansion of contacts with Communist countries abroad. Towards the end of Hafiz's period in office they criticised him for neglecting relations with Communist China in particular; but this seems to have been a tactical manoeuvre rather

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than a reflection of a real preference on their part for Chinese, as opposed to Soviet, methods.

6. After the coup several civilians were given prominent positions, including Dr. Nur al Din Atassi, who became Head of State; Dr. Yusuf Zu'ain, who became Prime Minister; and Dr. Ibrahim Makhus, who became Foreign Minister. The real power, however, lay more with the party than with the Cabinet, and more with the army and General Jadid than with the party.

7. Friction between Jadid and Major Selim Hatum, a Druze commando officer, led to the latter making an unsuccessful bid for power in September 1966. After this the dominance of the Alawites over the Druzes, which had already been apparent and was one of the causes of Hatum's discontent, became even more marked. The sectarian nature of the leadership proved from then on to be one of its strengths; one of the reasons why the conflicts within it did not lead to a serious upheaval for several years was the fear of letting in outsiders.

8. During 1967 and 1968 various stresses and strains appeared within the leadership. Eventually a power struggle developed between General Jadid and General Hafiz al Assad, the Minister of Defence, who was, like Jadid, an Alawite. Jadid identified himself with the policies with which the "neo-Ba'athists" had come to power - radical socialism, inclining

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towards Marxism; close cooperation with Communist countries; isolation from the UAR. On the Palestine issue he favoured a war of words rather than action, taking the view that Syria was not strong enough to contemplate renewed hostilities with Israel.

(He and his supporters were responsible for the decision to withdraw from the Golan Heights in 1967.) Assad, on the <sup>other</sup> hand, favoured more specifically Arab policies, including the fostering of closer relations with the UAR, which would enable a more united front to be presented against Israel. He wished to reduce Syrian dependence on the USSR and, at home, had a less doctrinaire approach than Jadid to social and economic affairs.

9. Assad, as Minister of Defence, had the support of the bulk of the military. Jadid, who was Assistant Secretary-General of the Regional Command, exerted his influence through the party apparatus and through civilians such as Zu'ain and Makhus. Through the party he also exercised control over the guerrilla organisation, al Sa'iqah, which became virtually his private army. In October 1968 Assad was able to assert himself over Jadid's faction to the extent that Zu'ain and Makhus were dropped from the Cabinet. Thence-forward he was the dominant figure in the Syrian leadership. But he did not eliminate Jadid at this time, and did not always find it possible to push through his own policies. This was due to

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some extent to Soviet support for Jadid.

10. With the increase in Assad's influence, the general trend within the Syrian régime in 1969 and 1970 was towards moderation of the attitudes with which the "neo-Ba'athists" had begun. The mellowing experience of office — may have contributed to this process. Also, once the party had held power for a comparatively long time it attracted to it many who had little real affinity with it but considered that their interests lay in joining it. Their influence, such as it was, was towards moderation. One observer noted, too, that each year was bringing into the party more young Alawite members who, on reaching adult life, were less conscious than their elders of discrimination against their sect. The régime remained nevertheless one of the most extreme in the Middle East.

11. Whatever semblance of stability the régime enjoyed was destroyed as the result of increased strains within it at the time of the Jordan civil war and Nasser's death in September 1970. Syria's intervention in the war was carried out at the instigation of the civilian wing of the party and was opposed by Assad. The lack of success of the operation led to recriminations and, after a period of political in-fighting, Assad carried out a bloodless coup on 13 November. Jadid and Atassi and some other members of the civilian wing were removed, and a new Provisional Regional Command was set up. From the

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communiqué issued by this body on 16 November it was evident that the new régime attached over-riding importance to improving relations with other revolutionary Arab States, particularly the UAR. As an earnest of this, on 27 November Syria acceded to the tripartite declaration on federal unity made earlier in the month by the UAR, Libya and the Sudan. (1) Having been somewhat out on a limb during her "neo-Ba'athist" period, Syria was thus showing a desire to return to the mainstream of Arab politics. At home, the Government formed on 21 November, with Assad as both Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, contained a majority of Ba'athists but also several "Nasserists" and two Communists. The base of power was thus seen to be widened, mostly for presentation purposes, but the Ba'ath retained overall control.

#### The Ba'ath in Iraq, 1968-1970

12. During its nine months in power in Iraq in 1963 the Ba'ath enjoyed little genuine support and was far from united. *(During the subsequent period in opposition it remained disunited.)* By 1967 it was possible to distinguish two principal groups within it: the "Right-wing" Ba'ath, composed mainly of those who had led the party in 1963 and still associated with the International Command led by Aflaq, and a Left-wing group aligned with the "neo-Ba'athists" in Syria. (There was also a small extremist group led by Ali Saleh al

(1) In April 1971 Syria, Libya and the UAR declared their intention to form a new federation of Arab republics.



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Sa'adi, whose methods when in command of the National Guard in 1963 had done much to discredit the party.) It was the first of these, the "Right-wing" or "orthodox" Ba'ath, that came to power in July 1968. Several of the most important posts in the new Government went to figures who had enjoyed prominence in 1963: General Ahmad Hassan al Bakr, who had been Prime Minister in 1963, became President; General Hardan Abdul Ghaffar al Tikriti, Commander of the Air Force in 1963, became Minister of Defence; and General Saleh Mahdi Ammash, Minister of Defence in 1963, became Minister of the Interior.

13. This régime, like the one in Syria, was subject to internal tensions. At first the main rivalry within it was between Ammash and Tikriti, but in April 1970 both of them were relieved of Ministerial office and appointed Vice-Presidents of the Republic, a move which reduced <sup>left their personal + that of</sup> ~~the influence of them~~ <sup>and.</sup> ~~and~~ the military was regarded as a tactical victory for Saddam Hussein al Tikriti, ~~the~~ (Deputy Secretary General of the Regional Command of the Ba'ath Party and Vice-Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council), who had by then gathered much power into his hands through the party apparatus. In the latter half of 1970 Ammash re-established his authority to some extent, but Hardan Tikriti was dismissed from office in October. (He was exiled, and in 1971 was assassinated in Kuwait.) His demise was precipitated by a crisis in the leadership over the

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question of whether Iraqi troops should intervene in the Jordan civil war, but was mainly the result of a long-standing grievance against him on the part of civilian Ba'athists ~~athists~~ for his part in easing the party out of power in 1963. By the end of 1970 the party appeared to have established itself firmly in power by rooting out potential foci of opposition and there was a trend towards relaxation in internal policies; as one prominent Iraqi official put it, the tug-of-war between the technicians and the realists on the one hand and the doctrinaire extremists on the other had begun to move in the right direction.

#### Ba'athist Policies in Syria and Iraq

14. Examination of the policies pursued by the Ba'athist régimes in Syria and Iraq indicates that the differences which had existed between the "orthodox" and "neo-Ba'athist" wings of the party in Syria in 1965 became less clear-cut during the time when the "neo-Ba'athists" were in power. It shows also that the disagreements between the two wings of the party in Baghdad and Damascus during the period July 1968 - November 1970 were caused by national rivalry much more than <sup>by</sup> doctrinal differences.

15. The "neo-Ba'athists" first actions <sup>after they came to</sup> ~~when in power~~ did indeed have an extremist air about them. The Syrian Cabinet formed in March 1966 included two members who were known for their Communist sympathies, as well as Zu'ain and Makhus, who <sup>to say the</sup> ~~at~~ least,



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had leanings towards Marxism. Khalid al Jundi, President of the Syrian Federation of Trade Unions, <sup>and</sup> ~~who was~~ an avowed Marxist, was allowed to build up a workers' militia for purging State institutions on the lines of the Chinese Red Guard, and his cousin, Colonel Abdul Karim al Jundi, became associated with equally extreme measures as head of the security services. The Government rescinded a decree banning Communists from the civil service and re-instated a number of them. In April the veteran Syrian Communist, Khalid Bikdash, returned to Damascus after an almost continuous eight-year exile. Ties with Communist countries were strengthened: the Soviet Union announced its decision to finance the Euphrates Dam in April 1966, after Zu'ain had visited Moscow, and diplomatic relations with North Viet-Nam and North Korea were established in July. Relations with the West deteriorated and, as the result of a dispute between the Syrian Government and the Iraq Petroleum Company, the flow of oil from Iraq to the Mediterranean was interrupted from December 1966 to March 1967.

16. The coming to power of the "neo-Ba'athists" thus marked a swing to the Left in Syria. But whether it was a decisive swing is open to question. Hafiz's régime had already, in 1965, undertaken sweeping measures of nationalisation. These measures had marked a milestone on the path of Moscow's gradual acceptance of the Ba'ath as an ally

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in the Middle East, and, whereas the advent of the "neo-Ba'ath" provided the impetus to reach another milestone - the Euphrates Dam agreement - in a sense this only put the finishing touches to a process begun long before. (The plans for the dam were being studied in Moscow as early as 1963.) Within Syria, the Ba'ath began to have dealings with individual Communists, but not with the Communist Party as such. Bikdash's return proved an anti-climax and little was heard of him afterwards in Syria. Khalid al Jundi's militia was disbanded in August 1967 and his cousin, Abdul Karim, ~~apparently~~ committed suicide in March 1969. By this time the influence of the extremist elements in the régime had been diluted, Zu'ain and Makhus had been relieved of office, and Assad's star was in the ascendant. He was, as ~~previously~~ <sup>above</sup> indicated, either unable or unwilling to eliminate Jadid's faction completely at that time, and it continued to have influence. But from 1969 onwards there was little to distinguish the régime's policies from those which might have been followed by its predecessor. By August 1970, indeed, the wheel had turned full enough circle for a Soviet newspaper to be complaining of the persecution of Communists in Syria. ~~And~~ As for Sino-Syrian relations, they did not ~~was~~ appreciably despite the pro-Chinese posture previously adopted by the "neo-Ba'athists."

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17. The policies pursued by the "orthodox" Ba'ath in Iraq from July 1968 onwards differed in some ways from those pursued by the "neo-Ba'athists" in Syria, but the broad picture in one respect was much the same - that of a non-Communist Government uneasily increasing its dependence on the USSR for reasons of expediency. Communists were given less freedom in Iraq than in Syria. The idea of forming a National Front, though often canvassed, was never put into practice because in Iraq, as in Syria, the Ba'ath were determined to prevent other parties sharing significantly in their power. Iraq, like Syria, became almost completely dependent on Communist countries for arms supplies and negotiated substantial aid agreements with them - including East Germany, to whom she granted diplomatic recognition in April 1969. Like Syria, too, she remained neutral in the Sino-Soviet dispute but gave lower priority to her relations with China than to those with the Soviet Union.

18. On another important policy issue - relations with the UAR - the positions adopted by the opposing factions within the party in Syria prior to 1966 were almost reversed when they were in power: the "neo-Ba'athists", who had previously been opposed to close relations with the UAR régime, came to adopt a fairly conciliatory attitude towards it, while the Iraqi Ba'ath, which claimed to be the orthodox wing of the party, pursued a policy of isolation from the UAR and other Arab States

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despite the party's theoretical commitment to Pan-Arabism.

19. Before they came to power in Syria, the "neo-Ba'athists", narrow in outlook and resenting Sunni domination, had been opposed to close ties with the UAR. While paying lip-service to the same Pan-Arab dogmas as the "orthodox" Ba'athists, they seemed bent on pursuing their vision of Ba'athism within Syria regardless of what was happening elsewhere in the Arab world. Once they had come to power, however, they too came to realise the importance of enjoying some support from Cairo and avoiding complete isolation. They therefore made advances to the UAR, with the result that a defence agreement between the two countries was signed in November 1966. This opened up the possibility of Nasser acting as a restraining influence on the Syrian military, *although it did* but did not in fact prevent them from harassing Israel with guerrilla raids and artillery bombardment and thereby contributing to the crisis which led to the six-day war in June 1967.

20. Despite the defence agreement, there was little ~~real~~ warmth in Syrian-UAR relations in 1966 and 1967. With the growth of Assad's influence, however, from 1968 onwards a more genuine desire on Syria's part to improve her relations with Nasser became apparent <sup>when</sup> ~~and~~ some individuals with Nasserist sympathies were given positions of responsibility within Syria. ~~as a result.~~ At the



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same time, Egyptian influence on Syria's foreign policies became more obvious. Pressure from Cairo was instrumental in bringing <sup>to</sup> an end ~~to~~ the crisis in Syrian-Lebanese relations over the guerrilla question in 1969, and the restrained nature of Syria's opposition to the American peace initiative in 1970 was equally a by-product of her desire not to step too far out of line with the UAR. In summary, the "neo-Ba'athist" Government, though more extreme in outlook than Nasser, tried not to stand too openly in opposition to him in Arab affairs.

21. For the "orthodox" wing of the party - its founders and the Syrian leaders of 1963-1966 - the question of relations with the UAR had long been a vexing one. Although they saw no real possibility of coming to terms with Nasser after the failure of the Syrian-Egyption union of 1958-1961 and the abortive attempt at unity between the Ba'athist régimes and the UAR in 1963, for them the Ba'athist revolution was meaningless if deprived of its international content. This was the attitude that distinguished the International Command from the Syrian Regional Command in 1965.

22. Any truly orthodox Ba'athist régime might therefore have been expected at least to keep its lines open with Nasser, as Hafiz had done. But <sup>in fact</sup> the régime established in Iraq in July 1968 more or less turned its back on him ~~and the UAR~~: leaving to the International Command the exegesis of Pan-Arab ideology, it

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pursued a narrowly independent policy in Arab affairs and, to protect its internal position, took measures against Nasserists in Iraq.

Relations between the two countries became severely strained in 1970 when, with Iraq's condemnation of Nasser's acceptance of the American peace initiative, a bitter propaganda war broke out between them. After Nasser's death Iraq-UAR relations remained clouded and the Iraqi Ba'ath continued in isolation, having allowed other interests to come before those of Pan-Arab solidarity.

Relations between the Syrian and Iraqi Ba'ath

23. Relations between the Ba'athist régimes in Syria and Iraq have been strained, partly because they have represented different tendencies within the party but much more because of national rivalry. As a cover for this national rivalry, the "neo-Ba'athists" used to refer to the Iraqis as a "Rightist clique" and to accuse them of collusion with the forces of imperialism and Zionism. The Iraqis, in turn, dismissed the "neo-Ba'athists" as "militarists". The presence of the deposed Syrian President, Hafiz, in Iraq (from 1967 onwards) was a particular cause of friction between the two régimes. Since July 1968 a prominent feature of the foreign policies of Syria and Iraq has been the desire of each to isolate the other; a striking example of this was afforded by Iraq's attitude towards the Egyptian peace initiative in the

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Lebanese crisis in 1969: though basically unsympathetic to the Lebanese Government, Iraq took this as an opportunity to isolate Syria and backed the initiative, which effectively closed the door on Syrian intervention in the Lebanon.

24. The furthest the two countries have gone towards cooperation was an agreement on the stationing of Iraqi troops in Syria as part of the Eastern Command in 1969. But their presence caused misgivings among some Syrians and gave rise to a dispute as to who should command them.

25. The ousting of the "neo-Ba'athists" from the Syrian Government in November 1970 seemed to hold out the prospect of some improvement of relations between the two countries. But, again because of national rivalry between Damascus and Baghdad, Iraq's immediate reaction was non-committal and Syria has shown herself more interested in cementing her relations with the UAR than in putting relations with her sister Ba'ath régime on a more friendly footing.

#### The International Command

26. The International Command of the Ba'ath Party, in theory the highest authority in the party's hierarchy, has seen various changes of location and composition during the period under review. After the "neo-Ba'athist" coup in 1966, which involved the expulsion of Aflaq and other members of the old guard, the existing International Command was naturally estranged from the Syrian régime. In August

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1968, after the Ba'ath had returned to power in Iraq, it transferred its headquarters from Beirut to Baghdad. (The Syrian régime had meanwhile set up its own, rival, "International Command".)

27. In Iraq the International Command has been active in various ways, including training party cadres from other Arab States. It is largely a puppet of the Iraqi régime, which finances <sup>it</sup> and uses it as a means of conferring on itself a status of legitimacy. There is inevitably some friction between the Iraqis and this body composed of Syrians, Lebanese and other nationalities as well as Iraqis. Nor is the International Command's approval of the Iraqi Ba'ath by any means complete. Aflaq himself, who was re-elected Secretary-General of the International Command in 1968, and again in 1970, deplores the arbitrary nature of the regimes in Iraq and Syria alike and has been openly critical of their policies.

28. The corruption of Ba'athism in the rough and tumble of its association with Syrian and Iraqi soldier politicians, which has transformed a Pan-Arab movement pledged to building a socialist revolution on a popular basis into two national dictatorships - a crime similar to that of which the Ba'ath used to accuse Nasser - has indeed confronted the party theorists with intractable problems. The Tenth Congress of the International Command, held early in

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1970, acknowledged the difficulty by declaring that political realities necessitated that party ideology be implemented in stages. But it gave no clear directive as to what it considered these stages should be. The Iraqi régime, like the Syrian, has dealt with the problem by ad hoc implementation of party doctrine as and when feasible: whereas the International Command is concerned with enhancing the prestige of the "orthodox" Ba'ath movement by the implementation of Ba'athist theory, the Ba'athist régimes are concerned first and foremost with the exercise of power. An example of the discord which these different attitudes can engender was provided by Iraq's decision not to commit herself to intervention on the guerrillas' side in the Jordan civil war<sup>in 1970</sup> and Aflaq's vehement criticism of them for this. Although there had previously been other disagreements on such questions as the Kurdish problem and collaboration with Communists, this one, being on an Arab national issue, touched a more sensitive spot and led to a ruffling of relations between Aflaq's group on the International Command and the Iraqi Ba'ath. The quarrel reportedly led to widespread defections from the "Right-wing" Ba'ath in Jordan and the Lebanon; but apart from the continued estrangement of Aflaq himself it seems to have been patched up.

#### Regional Branches of the Ba'ath Party

29. The Ba'ath Party has regional organisations in most other Arab countries - the

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Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Algeria, etc. Their membership is in most cases small. Nowhere do they appear to present an immediate threat to the existing régime. The many disputes within the party have had a confusing and demoralising effect on the regional branches. Those of their members who are ideologically motivated tend to look towards the party founders for guidance and to regard the establishments in Baghdad and Damascus with suspicion, but for the rest the most important question is presumably which Ba'athist centre will give them most material support. The Iraqis have in fact been more active than the Syrians in spreading their influence, particularly in the Persian Gulf, which they regard as their special hunting ground; their claim to be a "legitimate" Ba'athist régime and the backing given to them by the International Command has given them some advantage in this respect.

The Ba'ath Régimes and the West

30. The Ba'ath's policies have generally been detrimental to Western interests, though it is debatable whether those of any likely alternative régimes would have been more beneficial. Diplomatic relations between HMG and Iraq, which had been severed at the time of the six-day war, were re-established in May 1968, shortly before the Ba'ath returned to power there.

Although modest progress has since been made



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in the commercial and cultural fields, on oil, the most sensitive issue, very little has been achieved. The Ba'ath, despite its theoretical or long-term commitment to the nationalisation of foreign oil concerns, has not - in terms of legislation - taken things any further than Qasim's Law 80 of 1961 (which limited the activities of the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) to areas under production and thus deprived it of the major part of its concessionary areas) and Law 97 of 1967, empowering its National Oil Company (INOC) to exploit the confiscated areas. Various attempts have been made to promote a settlement with the IPC of resulting claims and counter-claims, but little progress has yet been achieved.

31. Relations between HMG and Syria <sup>have</sup> ~~have~~ remained severed since 1967 ~~and~~ the "neo-Ba'ath" followed a tougher line than the Iraqis on oil questions, as on most others. After negotiations between Syria and the IPC on the question of increased transit dues had broken down in December 1966, they stopped the flow of oil through the company's pipeline to the Mediterranean until March 1967, when a new agreement was reached. The pipeline's operations were again disrupted at the time of the June war - this time as the result of action taken by the (non-Ba'athist) Iraq Government, acting in the knowledge that if it did not interrupt supplies to the West the Syrians would. Finally, when Tapline, the pipeline from Saudi Arabia to the Lebanese

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port of Sidon, was damaged in May 1970, the Syrian Government refused to allow repairs to be carried out to it. The new Government, however, agreed in December that talks should be held with a view to re-opening it. (In January 1971 they authorised the repair of Tapline and negotiated a new royalty agreement.)

### Conclusions

32. In mid-1970 the Ba'ath Party presented a picture of two Ba'athist régimes operating under the same ideological slogans and maintained in power by the same technique of intimidation but divided by national and other differences and conspicuously hostile to each other; rival "International Commands" - the old command led by Aflaq lending some theoretical backing to the Iraq régime and receiving a subsidy from it but having little affinity with it, the other little more than a creation of the Syrian regime itself (1); and a number of weak subversive groups in other countries,

(1)

This Syrian International Command was ousted by Assad in November 1970 and survives, theoretically, in exile in Beirut; Assad is believed to be planning the election of a new (Syrian) International Command. The International Command ousted in November 1970 publishes a weekly paper Ar-Raya in Beirut, but the future of this paper is at present (July 1971) in some doubt owing to recent bomb explosions at its offices and a reported printers' strike; the Syrian Government do not at present have a press outlet in Beirut. The Iraqi Ba'ath used to subsidise Al Ahrar, a Beirut paper edited by Aflaq, but they withdrew their subsidy early in 1971 and it ceased publication; they now support two Beirut dailies, Al Kifah and Beirut, and one weekly, Ahad.



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possessing differing inclinations and loyalties but on the whole looking more to the "orthodox" International Command than elsewhere.

33. In the second half of the year, a time of crisis in the Middle East, the party itself went through several crises. In Syria the "neo-Ba'athist" group was ousted by a less doctrinaire Ba'athist group. In Iraq one prominent figure was expelled from the régime and Aflaq became estranged from it, but the party seemed by the end of the year to have consolidated its position.

34. The many divisions which have taken place within the party during the period under review have been caused in part by ideological disagreements but to a greater extent by personal, factional, sectarian and regional rivalries. That the rift between the two wings of the party in Syria and Iraq when the "neo-Ba'ath" were in power was not primarily the result of ideological differences seems to have been confirmed by the fact that relations between the two countries did not improve immediately after the "neo-Ba'ath" had gone.

35. Because of the complexities and inconsistencies of Ba'athist politics, such terms as "Left-wing" and "Right-wing", "extreme" and "moderate", are of limited value when applied to them, and can be misleading. The terms "orthodox" and "neo-Ba'athist" are of some value in identifying the theoretical

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relationship of the régimes in Iraq and Syria respectively to the party founders during the period under review, but they too can be misleading.

36. A major difficulty faced by the Ba'ath when in power has been the impossibility of its remaining there without the support of the army. The pattern of the party's relations with the officer class in Syria and Iraq is a tangled one, and the experience of the two countries has not been identical, but in both the alliance of civilian and military elements has produced strains within the régimes which have been established. In Syria, in both February 1966 and November 1970 the military faction of the leadership ousted the civilian faction. In Iraq, rivalry between civilian and military figures was in evidence during 1970 but the chief military figure of doubtful allegiance, Hardan Abdul Ghaffar al Tikriti, was dismissed in October and by the end of the year the party appeared to have established a stranglehold over potential dissidents in the armed forces and elsewhere. In both countries the party's association with the military and its determination to stay in power have resulted in government by methods not far removed from those of military dictatorship and the social-democratic part of the party's programme has never looked like being implemented.

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37. Another difficulty for the Ba'ath was, until quite recently, the impossibility of its coming to terms with Nasser. This took from under its feet the other main plank of its platform: Pan-Arabism. Now that both Nasser and the "neo-Ba'ath" have gone, Syria is seeking a closer accord with the UAR and certain other Arab States; but the basic ambivalence in her attitude to the UAR is likely to persist. Iraq-UAR relations meanwhile remain clouded.

38. Although there has been a great gap between the theory and practice of Ba'athism and the party has become extremely disunited, it has nevertheless made its mark on the Middle East scene. Firstly, its organisation and determination have helped to place régimes in power in Syria and Iraq and keep them there. Secondly, the doctrinaire element in the Ba'athist régimes' make-up has imparted a greater rigidity to their attitudes than might otherwise have existed. This has shown itself equally in their policies towards Palestine, towards other Arab States, and towards the West. The Ba'ath's presence in the Middle East has thus served to heighten the tensions already existing there.

39. With the demise of the "neo-Ba'athists" in November 1970 and the introduction into the Syrian Government of a wider range of non-Ba'athist opinion, it appeared that Syria intended to adopt a more flexible approach

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to her problems. She ~~has~~<sup>seen</sup> ~~already~~ joined the embryo federation of the UAR, Libya and the Sudan (1) and this has ~~led~~<sup>led</sup> to speculation that she might associate herself with any further efforts made by the UAR to seek a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israel dispute. In public statements, however, Assad ~~has~~ continued to reject the idea.

40. Soviet influence in Syria and Iraq has increased while they have been under Ba'athist rule. The Ba'ath-Soviet relationship has not, however, been without its strains, notably over the key questions of the Arab confrontation of Israel and the supply of Soviet arms for this purpose. (It is the Arab-Israel dispute that has given the Soviet Union the opportunity to expand its influence in the Arab world to its present extent, but Soviet arms deliveries have often not kept pace with Arab demands.) There have also been marked differences of opinion within the Ba'athist régimes as to how far the relationship should be allowed to go; this was one of the issues which led to the neo-Ba'athists' downfall. Although a tactical alliance with the Soviet Union may suit the Ba'ath, they can be expected to continue to retain a degree of independence from Soviet policies and to keep a rein on the activities of the local Communist parties.

(1) In April 1971, the UAR and Libya declared their intention to form a new federation.

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41. The Ba'ath's rule has generally been detrimental to Western interests in the Middle East, though, in Iraq at least, it is doubtful whether any conceivable alternative régime would be more beneficial to them. Neither in Iraq nor in Syria has the party fulfilled its theoretical commitment to nationalise foreign oil concerns, but both countries have been difficult to deal with on oil questions. ~~in particular.~~ The fall of the "neo-Ba'ath" brought to power in Syria a Ba'athist group which it was thought might prove less difficult to deal with than its predecessor. (This hope was to some extent borne out in January 1971, when the Syrians authorised the repair of Tapline and negotiated a new royalty agreement.) In Iraq, too, those who favoured a measure of realism, particularly in internal policies, seemed to be gaining ground over the doctrinaire elements in 1970.

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Research Department,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Coming to a decision

Reference.....

W/S

Mr. Brimlage

The Bath Party - Springfield

1964-1970

Please see Mr. Orchard's  
comments attached. He does not  
wish to see again.

I attach the full version of  
the paper, with proposed distribution  
- duplicate, and a separate  
copy of the Summary, with  
proposed ~~duplicate~~ distribution  
- duplicate.

RR <sup>sent 1/8</sup>  
Regulatory

*[Signature]*  
16/8/71.

Both the full memorandum  
and the summary should be electric  
typed and distributed.

*[Signature]*  
16/8



Mr. ~~Orlando~~

I attach a draft of "The  
Baath Party in Syria 1964-1970",  
prepared by Mr. Rundle: the light of  
Baghdad's comments. ~~for~~ (for info)  
Mr. Rundle's views on Baghdad's letter  
are also within. Generally I agree  
with Mr. Rundle. However, before preparing  
a final draft for the printers, you may  
wish to discuss amendments.

won't this  
do?

20/7/77.

5/

... Mr. Section



I am not in a position to adjudicate on  
the point of difference with Baghdad. If you &  
the British Depts. are satisfied that sufficient  
allowance is made for uncertainties or differences  
view. The draft can issue. It might be useful  
to insert a footnote "Some observers consider..."  
There are many irreconcilable differences.

The presentation is very clear now & quite good.  
I think the summary only should issue to  
NATO, Under Secretaries & general readers - it could go  
to quite a few parts. The full paper should go only to those  
who are involved. It has a stronger interest (e.g. Manning  
& staff, American staff). You can discuss with Mr. Ambrose. Perhaps the  
summary should have a few more sentences on doctrinal & policy differences.  
You could recommend to Mr. Rusk the occasional use  
of adverbial clauses to get a smoother flow & a little more  
stylistic variety. I doubt whether there are more than half a dozen  
although, when, etc. in the whole paper. The summary is  
perhaps a little too succinct for this year - but there  
is no need to alter it on this occasion.

2.17



RR 6/5

16 August 1971

Departmental Series No. 11

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUMTHE BA'ATH PARTY IN SYRIA AND IRAQ1964-1970SUMMARY

- A. Introduction. Ba'athist regimes have been in power in Syria since 1963 and in Iraq since July 1968. (Paragraph 1).
- B. In February 1966 the moderate, or "orthodox", Ba'ath regime in Syria led by President Hafiz was ousted by a group of extremists, or "neo-Ba'athists", who nearly all belonged to the Alawite and Druze minority sects. Many of them leaned heavily towards Marxism. At home they favoured extreme Left-wing policies; abroad they favoured closer cooperation with Communist countries and isolation from the UAR. After a time a power struggle began within the leadership between General Jadid, the Assistant Secretary-General of the Syrian Ba'ath Party, and General Assad, the Minister of Defence. The former favoured "neo-Ba'athist" policies and the latter more specifically Arab policies. In November 1970 Assad seized power. The Government which he then formed was predominantly Ba'athist. In November 1970 it acceded to the tripartite declaration on federal unity made earlier by the UAR, Libya and the Sudan (and in April 1971 Syria, Libya and the UAR declared their intention to form a new federation of Arab republics). (Paragraphs 2-11).
- C. In July 1968 a "Right-wing", or "orthodox", Ba'athist group led by some of those who had been in power in 1963 seized power in Iraq. There have since been tensions within the Iraqi regime, including rivalry between civilian and military figures, but by the end of 1970 the one military figure of doubtful allegiance had been dismissed and the party had consolidated its position to the extent that it felt able to relax its internal policies slightly. (Paragraphs 12-13).
- D. A comparison of policies shows that the disagreements between the "neo-Ba'athist" and "orthodox" wings of the Ba'ath party between 1968 and 1970 were caused by national rivalry between Syria and Iraq much more than by doctrinal differences. In Syria the neo-Ba'athists' initial extremism was moderated when they had been in power for a time. While expanding relations with Communist countries, they allowed the Syrian Communist Party little room for manoeuvre, and although one of their main points of difference with



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the preceding regime had been its attempts at rapprochement with the UAR they too eventually adopted a conciliatory attitude towards Nasser, trying not to stand too openly in opposition to him in Arab affairs. Pressure from Cairo was instrumental in bringing to an end the crisis in Syrian-Lebanese relations over the guerrilla question in 1969, and the restrained nature of Syria's opposition to the American peace initiative in 1970 was equally a by-product of her desire not to step too far out of line with the UAR. The so-called "orthodox" regime in Iraq, on the other hand, pursued a policy of isolation from the UAR and other Arab states despite its theoretical commitment to Pan-Arabism, and indulged in a bitter propaganda war with Nasser after he had accepted the American peace initiative in 1970. It too, like Syria, fostered close relations with the Soviet Union. (Paragraphs 14-22).

E. Relations between the Ba'athist regimes in Syria and Iraq have been poor and characterised by rivalry. The ousting of the "neo-Ba'athists" in Syria in November 1970 seemed to hold out the prospect of an improvement in relations between the two countries, but little immediate improvement took place. (Paragraphs 23-25).

F. The International Command, in theory the highest authority of the Ba'ath Party, was estranged from the Syrian regime after the "neo-Ba'athist" coup and transferred its headquarters to Baghdad when the Ba'ath came to power there in 1968. Its activities in Iraq have been largely window-dressing for the regime, which pays for them. Relations between it and the regime have not been entirely smooth. (Paragraphs 26-28).

G. The Ba'ath Party has regional branches in most other Arab countries. Nowhere do they appear to present an immediate threat to the existing regime. The Iraqi Ba'ath has been more active than the Syrian in spreading its influence, particularly in the Persian Gulf. (Paragraph 29).

H. The Ba'ath's policies have generally been detrimental to Western interests in the Middle East, particularly where oil has been concerned. There are indications, however, that the new Syrian regime will prove more flexible than the neo-Ba'athists were. (Paragraphs 30-31).

I. The many divisions which have taken place within the Ba'ath Party have been due less to ideological disagreements than to personal, factional, sectarian and national rivalries. There has been a wide gap between the theory and practice of Ba'athism. The realities of Arab politics have meant that the Ba'athist regimes have not implemented the social-democratic part of the party's programme; instead they have ruled by dictatorial methods. Rivalry with Nasser was one obstacle to the implementation of Pan-Arab policies, and national rivalries remain now that he has gone. (Paragraphs 32-37).

J. The party has nevertheless made its mark on the Middle East, both in that it has placed regimes in power in Syria and Iraq and kept them there



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and in that the doctrinaire Ba'athist element in these regimes' make-up has imparted a greater rigidity to their attitudes than might otherwise have existed. (Since the demise of the "neo-Ba'athists" in November 1970, however, Syria has shown signs of adopting a more flexible attitude to her problems, and in 1970 the Iraqi regime displayed a greater measure of realism in internal policies than previously.) (Paragraphs 38-39)

K. Soviet influence in Syria and Iraq has increased under Ba'athist rule, but the Ba'athist regimes can be expected to retain a degree of independence from Soviet policies and to keep a rein on local Communist activities. (Paragraph 40).

Note: The full paper has been circulated to consumers with a known interest in the details. Copies are available on request.



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RESEARCH DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM  
THE BA'ATH PARTY IN SYRIA AND IRAQ

**LAST PAPER**1964-1970SUMMARY

- A. Introduction. Ba'athist regimes have been in power in Syria since 1963 and in Iraq since July 1968. (Paragraph 1).
- B. In February 1966 the moderate, or "orthodox", Ba'ath regime in Syria led by President Hafiz was ousted by a group of extremists, or "neo-Ba'athists", who nearly all belonged to the Alawite and Druze minority sects. Many of them leaned heavily towards Marxism. At home they favoured extreme Left-wing policies; abroad they favoured closer cooperation with Communist countries and isolation from the UAR. After a time a power struggle began within the leadership between General Jadid, the Assistant Secretary-General of the Syrian Ba'ath Party, and General Assad, the Minister of Defence. The former favoured "neo-Ba'athist" policies and the latter more specifically Arab policies. In November 1970 Assad seized power. The Government which he then formed was predominantly Ba'athist. In November 1970 it acceded to the tripartite declaration on federal unity made earlier by the UAR, Libya and the Sudan (and in April 1971 Syria, Libya and the UAR declared their intention to form a new federation of Arab republics). (Paragraphs 2-11).
- C. In July 1968 a "Right-wing", or "orthodox", Ba'athist group led by some of those who had been in power in 1963 seized power in Iraq. There have since been tensions within the Iraqi regime, including rivalry between civilian and military figures, but by the end of 1970 the one military figure of doubtful allegiance had been dismissed and the party had consolidated its position to the extent that it felt able to relax its internal policies slightly. (Paragraphs 12-13).
- D. A comparison of policies shows that the disagreements between the "neo-Ba'athist" and "orthodox" wings of the Ba'ath party between 1968 and 1970 were caused by national rivalry between Syria and Iraq much more than by doctrinal differences. In Syria the neo-Ba'athists' initial extremism was moderated when they had been in power for a time. While expanding relations with Communist countries, they allowed the Syrian Communist Party little room for manoeuvre, and although one of their main points of difference with



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the preceding regime had been its attempts at rapprochement with the UAR they too eventually adopted a conciliatory attitude towards Nasser, trying not to stand too openly in opposition to him in Arab affairs. Pressure from Cairo was instrumental in bringing to an end the crisis in Syrian-Lebanese relations over the guerrilla question in 1969, and the restrained nature of Syria's opposition to the American peace initiative in 1970 was equally a by-product of her desire not to step too far out of line with the UAR. The so-called "orthodox" regime in Iraq, on the other hand, pursued a policy of isolation from the UAR and other Arab states despite its theoretical commitment to Pan-Arabism, and indulged in a bitter propaganda war with Nasser after he had accepted the American peace initiative in 1970. It too, like Syria, fostered close relations with the Soviet Union. (Paragraphs 14-22).

E. Relations between the Ba'athist regimes in Syria and Iraq have been poor and characterised by rivalry. The ousting of the "neo-Ba'athists" in Syria in November 1970 seemed to hold out the prospect of an improvement in relations between the two countries, but little immediate improvement took place. (Paragraphs 23-25).

F. The International Command, in theory the highest authority of the Ba'ath Party, was estranged from the Syrian regime after the "neo-Ba'athist" coup and transferred its headquarters to Baghdad when the Ba'ath came to power there in 1968. Its activities in Iraq have been largely window-dressing for the regime, which pays for them. Relations between it and the regime have not been entirely smooth. (Paragraphs 26-28).

G. The Ba'ath Party has regional branches in most other Arab countries. Nowhere do they appear to present an immediate threat to the existing regime. The Iraqi Ba'ath has been more active than the Syrian in spreading its influence, particularly in the Persian Gulf. (Paragraph 29).

H. The Ba'ath's policies have generally been detrimental to Western interests in the Middle East, particularly where oil has been concerned. There are indications, however, that the new Syrian regime will prove more flexible than the neo-Ba'athists were. (Paragraphs 30-31).

I. The many divisions which have taken place within the Ba'ath Party have been due less to ideological disagreements than to personal, factional, sectarian and national rivalries. There has been a wide gap between the theory and practice of Ba'athism. The realities of Arab politics have meant that the Ba'athist regimes have not implemented the social-democratic part of the party's programme; instead they have ruled by dictatorial methods. Rivalry with Nasser was one obstacle to the implementation of Pan-Arab policies, and national rivalries remain now that he has gone. (Paragraphs 32-37).

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and in that the doctrinaire Ba'athist element in these regimes' make-up has imparted a greater rigidity to their attitudes than might otherwise have existed. (Since the demise of the "neo-Ba'athists" in November 1970, however, Syria has shown signs of adopting a more flexible attitude to her problems, and in 1970 the Iraqi regime displayed a greater measure of realism in internal policies than previously.) (Paragraphs 38-39)

K. Soviet influence in Syria and Iraq has increased under Ba'athist rule, but the Ba'athist regimes can be expected to retain a degree of independence from Soviet policies and to keep a rein on local Communist activities. (Paragraph 40).

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### Introduction

Research Department Memoranda LR 6/13 of 1961 and LR 6/3 of 1964 traced the development of the Arab Socialist Renaissance Party (the Ba'ath) from 1958 up to the end of 1963, the year in which the party gained power in Syria and Iraq though it lost it again in Iraq after only nine month's rule. The present paper examines the main features of the party's development since then. In particular, it analyses the differences between the "orthodox" wing of the party - represented by the Syrian regime of 1963-1966 and by the present Iraqi regime, which has been in power since July 1968 - and the "neo-Ba'athist" group which ruled Syria from February 1966 to November 1970. (1) The position of the new, predominantly Ba'athist, Government formed in Syria in November 1970 is also discussed.

### The Ba'ath in Syria, 1964-1970

2. After the demise of the Ba'ath in Iraq in November 1963, Syria became the focus of Ba'athist power. During 1963 the Syrian Ba'ath Party had been divided on various issues; chief among these was the possibility of unity with the UAR, which, however, receded after an attempted Nasserist coup had been foiled in July. By the end of the year General Amin al Hafiz had emerged as the most powerful figure in the ruling group, thanks less to sponsorship within the party than to the support of the army, many officers of which were not party members. He showed himself gifted at conciliation and manipulation of the conflicting factions among the civilians and the military alike.

3. By 1965, however, a split had appeared within the party between the moderate, or "orthodox", Ba'athists and a group of extremists, or "neo-Ba'athists". The differences between them are described below. The moderates were represented by Hafiz himself, Michel Aflaq and Salah al Din Bitar, the two founders of the party, and Dr Munif al Razzaz, a Jordanian who succeeded Aflaq as Secretary-General of the International Ba'ath Party in 1965. The "neo-Ba'athists" were led by General Salah al Jadid, who as Chief of Staff had the support of the bulk of the army. In the autumn Hafiz, in an effort to

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(1) The terminology used to refer to Ba'athist groups - "Left-wing", "Right-wing", "neo-Ba'athist", "orthodox", etc. - is not entirely satisfactory and can be misleading. The terms "orthodox" and "neo-Ba'athist" have, however, been used in this memorandum because of their widespread use during the period 1966-1970 and because they are of value in identifying the theoretical relationships of the regimes in Iraq and Syria respectively to the party founders during that period. Since the differences between the regimes in Baghdad and Damascus are primarily nationalist, and since the "neo-Ba'ath" no longer rule in Syria, it should normally be sufficient in future to refer to the groups in power in the two countries as "the Iraqi Ba'ath" and "the Syrian Ba'ath".



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establish the primacy of himself and the civilians over the armed forces, set up a five-man Presidential Council, of which he was both the President and the only military member. At the same time he emasculated the National Council of the Revolutionary Command, which had previously been the supreme authority, by enlarging it from 24 to 95 members, the great majority of whom were civilians. (The theoretical justification for this was that its base was broadened by the inclusion of representatives of the peasants, the trade unions, the professional classes, etc.). There followed a struggle for power between the International Command of the Ba'ath Party, sympathetic to Hafiz, and the (Syrian) Regional Command, which was dominated by Jadid. This was decided temporarily in Hafiz's favour in December, when he dissolved the Regional Command and transferred its powers to the International Command. But in February 1966 Jadid's supporters launched a successful coup, as a result of which Aflaq, Bitar and Razzaz left the country and Hafiz was imprisoned. (In 1967 he escaped and since then he has been living in exile, mainly in Iraq.)

4. The February 1966 coup resulted in the replacement of one civilian-military Ba'athist team by another, but one in which the army were more dominant than previously and one whose outlook was substantially different from that of its predecessor. The "neo-Ba'athists" were younger and more radical than Hafiz and his associates. Nearly all belonged to the Alawite and Druze heterodox Muslim sects, which constitute less than 15 per cent of the Syrian population but which, for historical reasons, have a much higher representation in the armed forces. (1) Resenting the Sunni Muslims' monopoly of power, they carried their sectarian outlook to one of the main political issues in Syria, the question of relations with the UAR. Fearing that closer ties between the two countries would result in increased Sunni domination, as had been the case during the union of 1958-1961, they regarded Hafiz's intermittent efforts at rapprochement with Nasser with the utmost suspicion, even though it does not seem to have been his intention to do more than establish a modus vivendi with him. This, as much as any other policy issue, seems to have provided the immediate motive for the coup.

5. Other differences of policy also existed between the two groups, notably concerning the linked questions of socialism and relations with the Communist world. Differences had long existed within the Ba'ath Party as to the form that Arab socialism should take and the speed with which it should be implemented. The neo-Ba'athists, who were young, inexperienced politically, and, in the case of the Alawites at least, tended to regard the Sunnis as feudal oppressors, leaned heavily towards Marxism and favoured extreme Left-wing policies at home and further expansion of contacts with Communist countries abroad. Towards the end of Hafiz's period in office they criticised him for

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(1) See Research Department Memorandum: The Political Activity of the Alawites and Druzes in Syria (LR 6/48 of 1966).



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neglecting relations with Communist China in particular; but this seems to have been a tactical manoeuvre rather than a reflection of a real preference on their part for Chinese, as opposed to Soviet, methods.

6. After the coup several civilians were given prominent positions, including Dr Nur al Din Atassi, who became Head of State; Dr Yusuf Zu'ain, who became Prime Minister; and Dr Ibrahim Makhus, who became Foreign Minister. The real power, however, lay more with the party than with the Cabinet, and more with the army and General Jadid than with the party.

7. Friction between Jadid and Major Selim Hatum, a Druze commando officer, led to the latter making an unsuccessful bid for power in September 1966. After this the dominance of the Alawites over the Druzes, which had already been apparent and was one of the causes of Hatum's discontent, became even more marked. The sectarian nature of the leadership proved from then on to be one of its strengths; one of the reasons why the conflicts within it did not lead to a serious upheaval for several years was the fear of letting in outsiders.

8. During 1967 and 1968 various stresses and strains appeared within the leadership. Eventually a power struggle developed between General Jadid and General Hafiz al Assad, the Minister of Defence, who was, like Jadid, an Alawite. Jadid identified himself with the policies with which the "neo-Ba'athists" had come to power - radical socialism, inclining towards Marxism; close cooperation with Communist countries; isolation from the UAR. On the Palestine issue he favoured a war of words rather than action, taking the view that Syria was not strong enough to contemplate renewed hostilities with Israel. (He and his supporters were responsible for the decision to withdraw from the Golan Heights in 1967.) Assad, on the other hand, favoured more specifically Arab policies, including the fostering of closer relations with the UAR, which would enable a more united front to be presented against Israel. He wished to reduce Syrian dependence on the USSR and, at home, had a less doctrinaire approach than Jadid to social and economic affairs.

9. Assad, as Minister of Defence, had the support of the bulk of the military. Jadid, who was Assistant Secretary-General of the Regional Command, exerted his influence through the party apparatus and through civilians such as Zu'ain and Makhus. Through the party he also exercised control over the guerrilla organisation, al Sa'iqah, which became virtually his private army. In October 1968 Assad was able to assert himself over Jadid's faction to the extent that Zu'ain and Makhus were dropped from the Cabinet. Thence-forward he was the dominant figure in the Syrian leadership. But he did not eliminate Jadid at this time, and did not always find it possible to push through his own policies. This was due to some extent to Soviet support for Jadid.

10. With the increase in Assad's influence, the general trend within the Syrian regime in 1969 and 1970 was towards moderation of the attitudes with which the "neo-Ba'athists" had begun. The mellowing experience of office



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may have contributed to this process. Also, once the party had held power for a comparatively long time it attracted to it many who had little real affinity with it but considered that their interests lay in joining it. Their influence, such as it was, was towards moderation. One observer noted, too, that each year was bringing into the party more young Alawite members who, on reaching adult life, were less conscious than their elders of discrimination against their sect. The regime remained nevertheless one of the most extreme in the Middle East.

11. Whatever semblance of stability the regime enjoyed was destroyed as the result of increased strains within it at the time of the Jordan civil war and Nasser's death in September 1970. Syria's intervention in the war was carried out at the instigation of the civilian wing of the party and was opposed by Assad. The lack of success of the operation led to recriminations and, after a period of political in-fighting, Assad carried out a bloodless coup on 13 November. Jadid and Atassi and some other members of the civilian wing were removed, and a new Provisional Regional Command was set up. From the communique issued by this body on 16 November it was evident that the new regime attached over-riding importance to improving relations with other revolutionary Arab States, particularly the UAR. As an earnest of this, on 27 November Syria acceded to the tripartite declaration on federal unity made earlier in the month by the UAR, Libya and the Sudan. <sup>(1)</sup> Having been somewhat out on a limb during her "neo-Ba'athist" period, Syria was thus showing a desire to return to the mainstream of Arab politics. At home, the Government formed on 21 November, with Assad as both Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, contained a majority of Ba'athists but also several "Nasserists" and two Communists. The base of power was thus seen to be widened, mostly for presentation purposes, but the Ba'ath retained overall control.

### The Ba'ath in Iraq, 1968-1970

12. During its nine months in power in Iraq in 1963 the Ba'ath enjoyed little genuine support and was far from united. During the subsequent period in opposition it remained disunited. By 1967 it was possible to distinguish two principal groups within it: the "Right-wing" Ba'ath, composed mainly of those who had led the party in 1963 and still associated with the International Command led by Aflaq, and a Left-wing group aligned with the "neo-Ba'athists" in Syria. (There was also a small extremist group led by Ali Saleh al Sa'adi, whose methods when in command of the National Guard in 1963 had done much to discredit the party.) It was the first of these,

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<sup>(1)</sup> In April 1971 Syria, Libya and the UAR declared their intention to form a new federation of Arab republics.



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the "Right-wing" or "orthodox" Ba'ath, that came to power in July 1968. Several of the most important posts in the new Government went to figures who had enjoyed prominence in 1963: General Ahmad Hassan al Bakr, who had been Prime Minister in 1963, became President; General Hardan Abdul Ghaffar al Tikriti, Commander of the Air Force in 1963, became Minister of Defence; and General Saleh Mahdi Ammash, Minister of Defence in 1963, became Minister of the Interior.

13. This regime, like the one in Syria, was subject to internal tensions. At first the main rivalry within it was between Ammash and Tikriti, but in April 1970 both of them were relieved of Ministerial office and appointed Vice-Presidents of the Republic, a move which reduced both their personal influence and that of the military and was regarded as a tactical victory for Saddam Hussein al Tikriti (Deputy Secretary General of the Regional Command of the Ba'ath Party and Vice-Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council), who had by then gathered much power into his hands through the party apparatus. In the latter half of 1970 Ammash re-established his authority to some extent, but Hardan Tikriti was dismissed from office in October. (He was exiled, and in 1971 was assassinated in Kuwait.) His demise was precipitated by a crisis in the leadership over the question of whether Iraqi troops should intervene in the Jordan civil war, but was mainly the result of a long-standing grievance against him on the part of civilian Ba'athists for his part in easing the party out of power in 1963. By the end of 1970 the party appeared to have established itself firmly in power by rooting out potential foci of opposition and there was a trend towards relaxation in internal policies; as one prominent Iraqi official put it, the tug-of-war between the technicians and the realists on the one hand and the doctrinaire extremists on the other had begun to move in the right direction.

Ba'athist Policies in Syria and Iraq

14. Examination of the policies pursued by the Ba'athist regimes in Syria and Iraq indicates that the differences which had existed between the "orthodox" and "neo-Ba'athist" wings of the party in Syria in 1965 became less clear-cut during the time when the "neo-Ba'athists" were in power. It shows also that the disagreements between the two wings of the party in Baghdad and Damascus during the period July 1968 - November 1970 were caused by national rivalry much more than by doctrinal differences.

15. The first actions of the "neo-Ba'athists" after they came to power did indeed have an extremist air about them. The Syrian Cabinet formed in March 1966 included two members who were known for their Communist sympathies, as well as Zu'ain and Makhus who, to say the least, had leanings towards Marxism. Khalid al Jundi, President of the Syrian Federation of Trade Unions and an avowed Marxist, was allowed to build up a workers' militia for purging State institutions on the lines of the Chinese Red Guard, and his cousin, Colonel Abdul Karim al Jundi, became associated with equally extreme measures as head of the security services. The Government rescinded



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a decree banning Communists from the civil service and re-instated a number of them. In April the veteran Syrian Communist, Khalid Bikdash, returned to Damascus after an almost continuous eight-year exile. Ties with Communist countries were strengthened: the Soviet Union announced its decision to finance the Euphrates Dam in April 1966, after Zu'ain had visited Moscow, and diplomatic relations with North Viet-Nam and North Korea were established in July. Relations with the West deteriorated and, as the result of a dispute between the Syrian Government and the Iraq Petroleum Company, the flow of oil from Iraq to the Mediterranean was interrupted from December 1966 to March 1967.

16. The coming to power of the "neo-Ba'athists" thus marked a swing to the Left in Syria. But whether it was a decisive swing is open to question. Hafiz's regime had already, in 1965, undertaken sweeping measures of nationalisation. These measures had marked a milestone on the path of Moscow's gradual acceptance of the Ba'ath as an ally in the Middle East, and, whereas the advent of the "neo-Ba'ath" provided the impetus to reach another milestone - the Euphrates Dam agreement - in a sense this only put the finishing touches to a process begun long before. (The plans for the dam were being studied in Moscow as early as 1963.) Within Syria, the Ba'ath began to have dealings with individual Communists, but not with the Communist Party as such. Bikdash's return proved an anti-climax and little was heard of him afterwards in Syria. Khalid al Jundi's militia was disbanded in August 1967 and his cousin, Abdul Karim, apparently committed suicide in March 1969. By this time the influence of the extremist elements in the regime had been diluted, Zu'ain and Makhus had been relieved of office, and Assad's star was in the ascendant. He was, as indicated above, either unable or unwilling to eliminate Jadid's faction completely at that time, and it continued to have influence. But from 1969 onwards there was little to distinguish the regime's policies from those which might have been followed by its predecessor. By August 1970, indeed, the wheel had turned full enough circle for a Soviet newspaper to be complaining of the persecution of Communists in Syria. As for Sino-Syrian relations, they did not wax appreciably despite the pro-Chinese posture previously adopted by the "neo-Ba'athists."

17. The policies pursued by the "orthodox" Ba'ath in Iraq from July 1968 onwards differed in some ways from those pursued by the "neo-Ba'athists" in Syria, but the broad picture in one respect was much the same - that of a non-Communist Government uneasily increasing its dependence on the USSR for reasons of expediency. Communists were given less freedom in Iraq than in Syria. The idea of forming a National Front, though often canvassed, was never put into practice because in Iraq, as in Syria, the Ba'ath were determined to prevent other parties sharing significantly in their power. Iraq, like Syria, became almost completely dependent on Communist countries for arms supplies and negotiated substantial aid agreements with them - including East Germany, to whom she granted diplomatic recognition in April 1969. Like Syria, too, she remained neutral in the Sino-Soviet dispute



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but gave lower priority to her relations with China than to those with the Soviet Union.

18. On another important policy issue - relations with the UAR - the positions adopted by the opposing factions within the party in Syria prior to 1966 were almost reversed when they were in power: the "neo-Ba'athists", who had previously been opposed to close relations with the UAR regime, came to adopt a fairly conciliatory attitude towards it, while the Iraqi Ba'ath, which claimed to be the orthodox wing of the party, pursued a policy of isolation from the UAR and other Arab States despite the party's theoretical commitment to Pan-Arabism.

19. Before they came to power in Syria, the "neo-Ba'athists", narrow in outlook and resenting Sunni domination, had been opposed to close ties with the UAR. While paying lip-service to the same Pan-Arab dogmas as the "orthodox" Ba'athists, they seemed bent on pursuing their vision of Ba'athism within Syria regardless of what was happening elsewhere in the Arab world. Once they had come to power, however, they too came to realise the importance of enjoying some support from Cairo and avoiding complete isolation. They therefore made advances to the UAR, with the result that a defence agreement between the two countries was signed in November 1966. This opened up the possibility of Nasser acting as a restraining influence on the Syrian military, although it did not prevent them from harassing Israel with guerrilla raids and artillery bombardment and thereby contributing to the crisis which led to the six-day war in June 1967.

20. Despite the defence agreement, there was little warmth in Syrian-UAR relations in 1966 and 1967. With the growth of Assad's influence, however, from 1968 onwards a more genuine desire on Syria's part to improve her relations with Nasser became apparent when some individuals with Nasserist sympathies were given positions of responsibility within Syria. At the same time, Egyptian influence on Syria's foreign policies became more obvious. Pressure from Cairo was instrumental in bringing to an end the crisis in Syrian-Lebanese relations over the guerrilla question in 1969, and the restrained nature of Syria's opposition to the American peace initiative in 1970 was equally a by-product of her desire not to step too far out of line with the UAR. In summary, the "neo-Ba'athist" Government, though more extreme in outlook than Nasser, tried not to stand too openly in opposition to him in Arab affairs.

21. For the "orthodox" wing of the party - its founders and the Syrian leaders of 1963-1966 - the question of relations with the UAR had long been a vexing one. Although they saw no real possibility of coming to terms with Nasser after the failure of the Syrian-Egyptian union of 1958-1961 and the abortive attempt at unity between the Ba'athist regimes and the UAR in 1963, for them the Ba'athist revolution was meaningless if deprived of its international content. This was the attitude that distinguished the International Command from the Syrian Regional Command in 1965.



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22. Any truly orthodox Ba'athist regime might therefore have been expected at least to keep its lines open with Nasser, as Hafiz had done. But in fact the regime established in Iraq in July 1968 more or less turned its back on him: leaving to the International Command the exegesis of Pan-Arab ideology, it pursued a narrowly independent policy in Arab affairs and, to protect its internal position, took measures against Nasserists in Iraq. Relations between the two countries became severely strained in 1970 when, with Iraq's condemnation of Nasser's acceptance of the American peace initiative, a bitter propaganda war broke out between them. After Nasser's death Iraq-UAR relations remained clouded and the Iraqi Ba'ath continued in isolation, having allowed other interests to come before those of Pan-Arab solidarity.

### Relations between the Syrian and Iraqi Ba'ath

23. Relations between the Ba'athist regimes in Syria and Iraq have been strained, partly because they have represented different tendencies within the party but much more because of national rivalry. As a cover for this national rivalry, the "neo-Ba'athists" used to refer to the Iraqis as a "Rightist clique" and to accuse them of collusion with the forces of imperialism and Zionism. The Iraqis, in turn, dismissed the "neo-Ba'athists" as "militarists". The presence of the deposed Syrian President, Hafiz, in Iraq (from 1967 onwards) was a particular cause of friction between the two regimes. Since July 1968 a prominent feature of the foreign policies of Syria and Iraq has been the desire of each to isolate the other; a striking example of this was afforded by Iraq's attitude towards the Egyptian peace initiative in the Lebanese crisis in 1969: though basically unsympathetic to the Lebanese Government, Iraq took this as an opportunity to isolate Syria and backed the initiative, which effectively closed the door on Syrian intervention in the Lebanon.

24. The furthest the two countries have gone towards cooperation was an agreement on the stationing of Iraqi troops in Syria as part of the Eastern Command in 1969. But their presence caused misgivings among some Syrians and gave rise to a dispute as to who should command them.

25. The ousting of the "neo-Ba'athists" from the Syrian Government in November 1970 seemed to hold out the prospect of some improvement of relations between the two countries. But, again because of national rivalry between Damascus and Baghdad, Iraq's immediate reaction was non-committal and Syria has shown herself more interested in cementing her relations with the UAR than in putting relations with her sister Ba'ath regime on a more friendly footing.

### The International Command

26. The International Command of the Ba'ath Party, in theory the highest authority in the party's hierarchy, has seen various changes of location and composition during the period under review. After the "neo-Ba'athist" coup



in 1966, which involved the expulsion of Aflaq and other members of the old guard, the existing International Command was naturally estranged from the Syrian regime. In August 1968, after the Ba'ath had returned to power in Iraq, it transferred its headquarters from Beirut to Baghdad. (The Syrian regime had meanwhile set up its own, rival, "International Command".)

27. In Iraq the International Command has been active in various ways, including training party cadres from other Arab States. It is largely a puppet of the Iraqi regime, which finances it and uses it as a means of conferring on itself a status of legitimacy. There is inevitably some friction between the Iraqis and this body composed of Syrians, Lebanese and other nationalities as well as Iraqis. Nor is the International Command's approval of the Iraqi Ba'ath by any means complete. Aflaq himself, who was re-elected Secretary-General of the International Command in 1968, and again in 1970, deplores the arbitrary nature of the regimes in Iraq and Syria alike and has been openly critical of their policies.

28. The corruption of Ba'athism in the rough and tumble of its association with Syrian and Iraqi soldier politicians, which has transformed a Pan-Arab movement pledged to building a socialist revolution on a popular basis into two national dictatorships - a crime similar to that of which the Ba'ath used to accuse Nasser - has indeed confronted the party theorists with intractable problems. The Tenth Congress of the International Command, held early in 1970, acknowledged the difficulty by declaring that political realities necessitated that party ideology be implemented in stages. But it gave no clear directive as to what it considered these stages should be. The Iraqi regime, like the Syrian, has dealt with the problem by ad hoc implementation of party doctrine as and when feasible: whereas the International Command is concerned with enhancing the prestige of the "orthodox" Ba'ath movement by the implementation of Ba'athist theory, the Ba'athist regimes are concerned first and foremost with the exercise of power. An example of the discord which these different attitudes can engender was provided by Iraq's decision not to commit herself to intervention on the guerrillas' side in the Jordan civil war in 1970 and Aflaq's vehement criticism of them for this. Although there had previously been other disagreements on such questions as the Kurdish problem and collaboration with Communists, this one, being on an Arab national issue, touched a more sensitive spot and led to a ruffling of relations between Aflaq's group on the International Command and the Iraqi Ba'ath. The quarrel reportedly led to widespread defections from the "Right-wing" Ba'ath in Jordan and the Lebanon; but apart from the continued estrangement of Aflaq himself it seems to have been patched up.

#### Regional Branches of the Ba'ath Party

29. The Ba'ath Party has regional organisations in most other Arab countries - the Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Algeria, etc. Their membership is in most cases small. Nowhere do



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they appear to present an immediate threat to the existing regime. The many disputes within the party have had a confusing and demoralising effect on the regional branches. Those of their members who are ideologically motivated tend to look towards the party founders for guidance and to regard the establishments in Baghdad and Damascus with suspicion, but for the rest the most important question is presumably which Ba'athist centre will give them most material support. The Iraqis have in fact been more active than the Syrians in spreading their influence, particularly in the Persian Gulf, which they regard as their special hunting ground; their claim to be a "legitimate" Ba'athist regime and the backing given to them by the International Command has given them some advantage in this respect.

### The Ba'ath Regimes and the West

30. The Ba'ath's policies have generally been detrimental to Western interests, though it is debatable whether those of any likely alternative regimes would have been more beneficial. Diplomatic relations between HMG and Iraq, which had been severed at the time of the six-day war, were re-established in May 1968, shortly before the Ba'ath returned to power there. Although modest progress has since been made in the commercial and cultural fields, on oil, the most sensitive issue, very little has been achieved. The Ba'ath, despite its theoretical or long-term commitment to the nationalisation of foreign oil concerns, has not - in terms of legislation - taken things any further than Qasim's Law 80 of 1961 (which limited the activities of the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) to areas under production and thus deprived it of the major part of its concessionary areas) and Law 97 of 1967, empowering its National Oil Company (INOC) to exploit the confiscated areas. Various attempts have been made to promote a settlement with the IPC of resulting claims and counter-claims, but little progress has yet been achieved.

31. Relations between HMG and Syria have remained severed since 1967 and the "neo-Ba'ath" followed a tougher line than the Iraqis on oil questions, as on most others. After negotiations between Syria and the IPC on the question of increased transit dues had broken down in December 1966, they stopped the flow of oil through the company's pipeline to the Mediterranean until March 1967, when a new agreement was reached. The pipeline's operations were again disrupted at the time of the June war - this time as the result of action taken by the (non-Ba'athist) Iraq Government, acting in the knowledge that if it did not interrupt supplies to the West the Syrians would. Finally, when Tapline, the pipeline from Saudi Arabia to the Lebanese port of Sidon, was damaged in May 1970, the Syrian Government refused to allow repairs to be carried out to it. The new Government, however, agreed in December that talks should be held with a view to re-opening it. (In January 1971 they authorised the repair of Tapline and negotiated a new royalty agreement.)

### Conclusions

32. In mid-1970 the Ba'ath Party presented a picture of two Ba'athist regimes



operating under the same ideological slogans and maintained in power by the same technique of intimidation but divided by national and other differences and conspicuously hostile to each other; rival "International Commands" - the old command led by Aflaq lending some theoretical backing to the Iraq regime and receiving a subsidy from it but having little affinity with it, the other little more than a creation of the Syrian regime itself <sup>(1)</sup>; and a number of weak subversive groups in other countries, possessing differing inclinations and loyalties but on the whole looking more to the "orthodox" International Command than elsewhere.

33. In the second half of the year, a time of crisis in the Middle East, the party itself went through several crises. In Syria the "neo-Ba'athist" group was ousted by a less doctrinaire Ba'athist group. In Iraq one prominent figure was expelled from the regime and Aflaq became estranged from it, but the party seemed by the end of the year to have consolidated its position.

34. The many divisions which have taken place within the party during the period under review have been caused in part by ideological disagreements but to a greater extent by personal, factional, sectarian and regional rivalries. That the rift between the two wings of the party in Syria and Iraq when the "neo-Ba'ath" were in power was not primarily the result of ideological differences seems to have been confirmed by the fact that relations between the two countries did not improve immediately after the "neo-Ba'ath" had gone.

35. Because of the complexities and inconsistencies of Ba'athist politics, such terms as "Left-wing" and "Right-wing", "extreme" and "moderate", are of limited value when applied to them, and can be misleading. The terms "orthodox" and "neo-Ba'athist" are of some value in identifying the theoretical relationship of the regimes in Iraq and Syria respectively to the party founders during the period under review, but they too can be misleading.

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(1) This Syrian International Command was ousted by Assad in November 1970 and survives, theoretically, in exile in Beirut; Assad is believed to be planning the election of a new (Syrian) International Command. The International Command ousted in November 1970 publishes a weekly paper Ar-Raya in Beirut, but the future of this paper is at present (July 1971) in some doubt owing to recent bomb explosions at its offices and a reported printers' strike; the Syrian Government do not at present have a press outlet in Beirut. The Iraqi Ba'ath used to subsidise Al Ahrar, a Beirut paper edited by Aflaq, but they withdrew their subsidy early in 1971 and it ceased publication; they now support two Beirut dailies, Al Kifah and Beirut, and one weekly, Ahad.



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36. A major difficulty faced by the Ba'ath when in power has been the impossibility of its remaining there without the support of the army. The pattern of the party's relations with the officer class in Syria and Iraq is a tangled one, and the experience of the two countries has not been identical, but in both the alliance of civilian and military elements has produced strains within the regimes which have been established. In Syria, in both February 1966 and November 1970 the military faction of the leadership ousted the civilian faction. In Iraq, rivalry between civilian and military figures was in evidence during 1970 but the chief military figure of doubtful allegiance, Hardan Abdul Ghaffar al Tikriti, was dismissed in October and by the end of the year the party appeared to have established a stranglehold over potential dissidents in the armed forces and elsewhere. In both countries the party's association with the military and its determination to stay in power have resulted in government by methods not far removed from those of military dictatorship and the social-democratic part of the party's programme has never looked like being implemented.

37. Another difficulty for the Ba'ath was, until quite recently, the impossibility of its coming to terms with Nasser. This took from under its feet the other main plank of its platform: Pan-Arabism. Now that both Nasser and the "neo-Ba'ath" have gone, Syria is seeking a closer accord with the UAR and certain other Arab States; but the basic ambivalence in her attitude to the UAR is likely to persist. Iraq-UAR relations meanwhile remain clouded.

38. Although there has been a great gap between the theory and practice of Ba'athism and the party has become extremely disunited, it has nevertheless made its mark on the Middle East scene. Firstly, its organisation and determination have helped to place regimes in power in Syria and Iraq and keep them there. Secondly, the doctrinaire element in the Ba'athist regimes' make-up has imparted a greater rigidity to their attitudes than might otherwise have existed. This has shown itself equally in their policies towards Palestine, towards other Arab States, and towards the West. The Ba'ath's presence in the Middle East has thus served to heighten the tensions already existing there.

39. With the demise of the "neo-Ba'athists" in November 1970 and the introduction into the Syrian Government of a wider range of non-Ba'athist opinion, it appeared that Syria intended to adopt a more flexible approach to her problems. She soon joined the embryo federation of the UAR, Libya and the Sudan <sup>(1)</sup> and this has led to speculation that she might associate herself with any further efforts made by the UAR to seek a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israel dispute. In public statements, however, Assad continued to reject the idea.

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(1) In April 1971, the UAR and Libya declared their intention to form a new federation.



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40. Soviet influence in Syria and Iraq has increased while they have been under Ba'athist rule. The Ba'ath-Soviet relationship has not, however, been without its strains, notably over the key questions of the Arab confrontation of Israel and the supply of Soviet arms for this purpose. (It is the Arab-Israel dispute that has given the Soviet Union the opportunity to expand its influence in the Arab world to its present extent, but Soviet arms deliveries have often not kept pace with Arab demands.) There have also been marked differences of opinion within the Ba'athist regimes as to how far the relationship should be allowed to go: this was one of the issues which led to the neo-Ba'athists' downfall. Although a tactical alliance with the Soviet Union may suit the Ba'ath, they can be expected to continue to retain a degree of independence from Soviet policies and to keep a rein on the activities of the local Communist parties.

41. The Ba'ath's rule has generally been detrimental to Western interests in the Middle East, though, in Iraq at least, it is doubtful whether any conceivable alternative regime would be more beneficial to them. Neither in Iraq nor in Syria has the party fulfilled its theoretical commitment to nationalise foreign oil concerns, but both countries have been difficult to deal with on oil questions. The fall of the "neo-Ba'ath" brought to power in Syria a Ba'athist group which it was thought might prove less difficult to deal with than its predecessor. (This hope was to some extent borne out in January 1971, when the Syrians authorised the repair of Tapline and negotiated a new royalty agreement.) In Iraq, too, those who favoured a measure of realism, particularly in internal policies, seemed to be gaining ground over the doctrinaire elements in 1970.

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